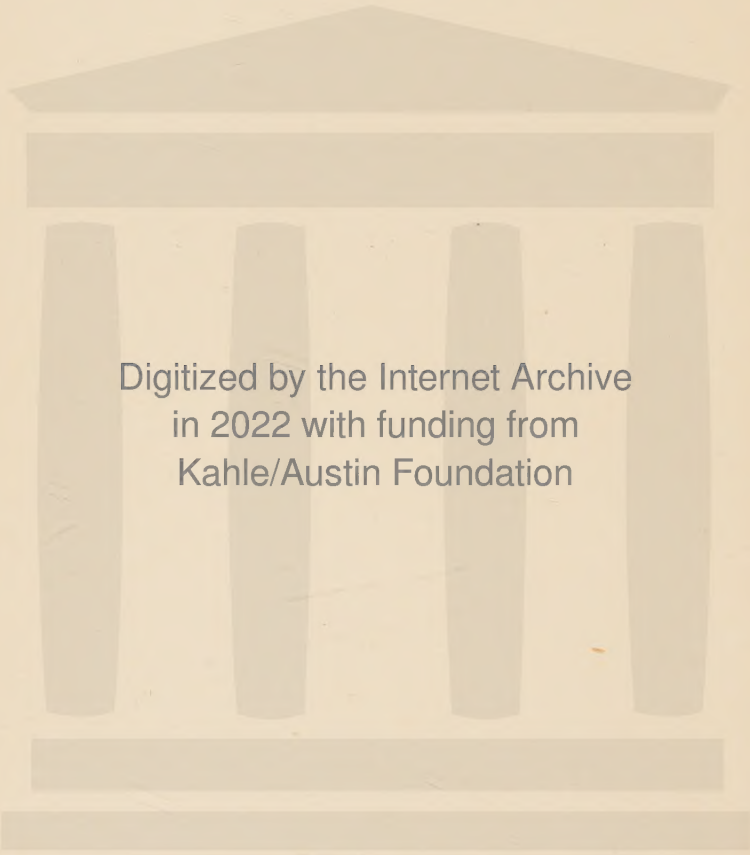


TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES

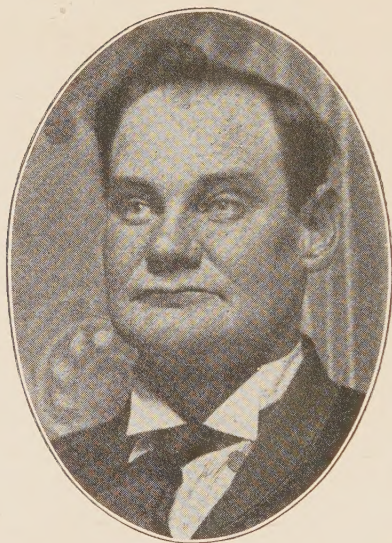
OF ONE OF THE BRAVEST
MEN WHO EVER LIVED IN TEXAS

JAMES ANDREW WILSON

C. B. Sanders, M.D.
Houston, Texas



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JAMES ANDREW WILSON

The Tame Boy as he is.

JAMES ANDREW WILSON
LIFE
TRAVELS and ADVENTURES

The Greatest Fighter
Living in Texas

Written
by
Himself

GAMMEL'S BOOK STORE
AUSTIN, TEXAS

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1927

Foreword.

Now listen—you aspiring young rannie. Put up that little pea-shooter, and forget it. There are no scenes for the play anymore and no bad actors to play opposite in the drama. It is all genteel rascality now. They do it to you in such a way, and in such a gentle manner, that if you resent it other than through the courts, you make a jackass out of yourself and get in jail to boot. I am so peculiarly constructed that I never did, nor ever will carry a grievance to the court for any mean turn or dirty trick any guy ever has, or will do to me. This would not do for the citizenry as a whole else the people would drift back to primitivehood with a chip on one shoulder and a bloody ended club on the other. It does not pay to be a gunman, youngster, either for good or bad. My motto has been—"Strive to be right." I have lived up to it best I could, yet there were certain enemies, and kinsfolk of certain defunct toughs who termed me—"Gunman." If I really have been a gunman, I have written this—my Biography, to show the why and wherefores of such a term and I am willing to let my readers be the judge. I believe rather, that they will agree that I have been a nemesis to cold killers; rascals and other toughs. I have not written this book to beget for myself any sort of

fame or notoriety. One fellow said of me, "He don't give a d—n for his rep. I don't believe he even knows he's bad to trifle with"—Well I never considered myself a bad guy: The trouble was, I never would take a thing off of a so-called bad guy. I had less patience with those than any other gentry. I did not fear them or anybody. Why should I? They were only human like myself. Where is the distinction? I never could define any. Most of my strife and adventure was with so-called bad people.

This is not a story of frontier adventure, although I guess I had more real adventure than any two of the old heroes of the frontier ever experienced. The scenes of my turbulent career were Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Alabama.

Now youngster, come with me in retro-reminiscences back through bygone events and I will show you some ideals to shoot for, should you ever be called upon to act a gunman, which may the Lord forbid. Sola, is my wife who plays in the romance feature of this adventure story. The book is financed and published by H. P. N. Gammel of Austin, Texas. He says that he has published it for the good of the world. Read it. I submit the book to you.

JAMES ANDREW WILSON,
(Little Jim).

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
JAMES ANDREW WILSON



J. A. WILSON
The Wild Boy as he was.

CHAPTER I.

Ran Away from Home.

If my readers prefer polished, punctilious, fiction to a story of unvarnished truth, I fear I cannot interest them in the foregoing autobiography, which I have selected from the story of my life. Several years ago some of my friends suggested that I write the story of my life from the age of sixteen to thirty-eight years. About the time I had the story transferred from pencil tablet to typewritten manuscript form the Great World War came up. I had three young sons who were to enlist, therefore I lost all interest in the manuscript. It was never published but my neighbors have borrowed and read the MS. until it is worn to a frazzle and some of the frazzles scattered.

I first discovered America in the hills of old Tennessee. My grandmother, old Aunt Phoebe Adair, and my mother were there on that unfortunate occasion and could swear b-gosh to that fact. Aunt Phoebe said years afterwards, "I knew he would be a bad-un for he cussed and bit me whilst I was dressin' him."

In the summer of 1885, when I was a little more than sixteen years old, I ran away from home. My

father's stern, honest, good morals and gentle manners, and my call to the wild and woolly nature, always clashed and so I went. Although my father knew that I would fight the well-known devil in physical form till this body was killed, he also knew I was too weak spiritually to lift my hand, so he determined to bring me back. After several days he caught me one night at an uncle's, dragged me out of bed, and ordered me to get ready to go home. But I was a young panther in a scuffle. I finally twisted loose from him and vaulted through an open window in my shirt-tail and ran for a thicket on the creek, where I hid till ten o'clock next day. I called to one of my little cousins plowing in the field near by. When he came to where I was—grinning at my nakedness—I asked him to go after my clothes; but he said, "Boy, you ain't got no clothes. Your daddy took em home with him this morning."

I swatted mosquitoes and gnats till my legs were as red as a turkey's snout. Then about one o'clock my uncle brought me clothes, shoes, and a hat, and I left the county. I got a job with a farmer and worked two months. I bought myself some new clothes and a small revolver. I had practiced with the revolver every day till I could shoot a chicken's head off walking.

One day at noon, while sitting upon the front veranda with the farmer, I saw my father riding up the lane in a swinging lope. I ran to my room, threw my belongings into a bag, and made for the

woods back of the farm. I had fully resolved never to go back home to stay. My father, it seemed, was just as firmly resolved that he would raise me to a lawful age, properly vouched for, and that I should make suitable proficiency in my nonage to enable me to cope with the master struggle of life in the future to come. Dear old father, he is feeble now, but still lives. He was right, I was wrong. My brothers, who remained with him until of age, own fine farm homes today, while I own a small poor paying business, the office of Justice of the Peace, and an unwelcome reputation as a bad "scrapper"—far away in Texas—far from the beloved scenes of my childhood, where among the verdant green hills, clear rippling rivulets run in every draw which is teeming with minnows and sun-perch. The hills and dales abloom with the wild honey-suckle and plum; the sweet song of the bob-o-link echoing among the tall poplars, beech and maple; the beautiful water falls sparkling in the morning sun, or turned into great white stalactites of ice in the winter. The sweet hours of reflection and reliving those days are all I have to cheer me now in this mortal existence, but I have a hope that when this material time with me is no more, sweet memories will eclipse the bad—into the shadows of oblivion.

When watching from a covert, I saw my father ride away, I went back to the farm house. The farmer changed his quid to the other side, spat, and said, "Wal, sonny, ye got to go; your daddy fer-



WHEN WATCHING FROM A COVERT.

bids me ter hire ye any longer. What are ye gona do about it?"

"Guess I will go some where else. Did you pay him what you owe me?"

"No, I lied to him a little. I told him I didn't owe you nothin' to amount to anything and he let it go at that. Here's twelve dollars and seventy-five cents, is that right?"

The balance was correct and I departed from the old fellow with his blessing and well wishes. I went from there to Hardin County, about forty miles from home and hired to a timber cutter to snake logs with a team. I let the boss keep my pay until the second pay day. When I went to the office to collect the boss showed me a letter from my father demanding my wages. Well, the boss couldn't do a thing but send him the money. This left me broke, bitter of heart, and utterly discouraged. The boss respectfully told me that he could not pay me any wages for work but that I was welcome to eat and sleep at the same quarters until I could find something, or make up my mind what I would do.

Three days later, there was a lynching over at the county site of my home county. It was reported that the mob was led by a notorious old outlaw who lived on the Tennessee River in Perry County, the adjoining county. This old rascal's name was Rube Kantrell, known and feared through all Tennessee. He had more notches on his gun stock than any other man in the state. Several Secret Service men

went after him that never returned. Officers for one reason or another (fear mostly) let him strictly alone. No one would make complaint or prosecute, or if they did, he had his intimidated witnesses always ready.

Heartsick and full of bitterness and resentment against my father for what seemed to be a cruel hounding of me, the coming of old Rube Kantrell's name to my attention gave me the first unfortunate idea of the solution of my situation. Though my father was a fearless man, I knew he would never trouble me at Kantrell's Landing. My father never went looking for trouble.

Well, with the idea lying dormant in my heart I proceeded to take a job over at a sawmill a few miles farther on determined to give father another chance to let me alone before I would take refuge under the protection of the old outlaw. After I had worked here about eight months father found me out again—rode up one evening and demanded my wages of the boss. The boss had kept me paid up and stated the fact to my father. But father informed the boss that he would start proceedings to get the wages and the boss knew he would win out in the suit and asked me what to do about it. I took out my pocket-book and paid over all the wages that had been paid to me by the Company; in turn, the boss handed it to father. I looked him straight in the eye and said, "That's the limit, you've done it now."

As I walked away I heard him tell the boss not to hire me any longer. I replied for the boss over my shoulder, "He won't and you won't hound me any further, either."

I went to Savannah, went aboard a steamboat, and landed at Kantrell's Landing on the Tennessee. Kantrell's possessions included a river farm, a general store, a warehouse, a mill, and a nice, neat dwelling which stood upon the hill overlooking the river. You could stand upon the veranda and see far up or down the river, a steamboat now and then with its white points of escaping steam and its black roll of coal smoke from the stacks. I found old Kantrell presiding at the store where the following conversation took place:

"James A. Wilson is my name, Mr.—"

"Kantrell is mine, young man. What can I do for you?"

"Mr. Kantrell, I am from Wayne County up here. I have run away from home and my father persists in drawing my wages with the purpose of compelling me to return home. He has forbidden every employer I have worked for to keep me, and I don't believe he would trouble me here if you will give me employment."

"No, I don't believe he would either," Old Kantrell jerked out.

"Yes, I will give ye a job. I need an all purpose boy here now. Can ye row a boat across the river?"

Can ye fire an engine? In fact, what all are ye good for anyhow?"

"Yes, I can row a boat, and fire a stationary engine, chop wood, garden, or do anything on the farm. I can wrap up goods and keep accounts fairly well. This, in case you might need me in the store occasionally."

"Oh, me an' Jack, my son thar, keep the store mostly. Might help a little on Saturdays. Jack, this is young Mr. Wilson, from up in Wayne. Mr. Wilson, that's Jack Kantrell, my son."

From behind a desk, across the room, arose a handsome scowling youth about eighteen years of age apparently. His every movement and pose of feature was meant to show his importance to me, though he shook my hand with a very cordial grip as he said, "Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Wilson. Dad and I were up in your county last year on a little necktie party; Joe Whitten came after us to lead the mob. Do you happen to know Joe?"

"Why, yes, I should know Joe. He is a first cousin of mine but I do not approve of lynchings. In this case it was never ascertained that the negro was the one that committed the crime; besides, the sheriff was shot while doing his best to protect his prisoner."

"That will be enough from you about that. Jack, take young Mr. Wilson, the 'pious,' up to the house

and show him to yer ma so she can fix him up a room." Then I followed the young Chip off the old Block to the house on the hill, where I was introduced to a poor little old woman whose brow-beaten appearance savored of the wash tub and scullery drudge. She offered me her hand and lifted her kindly face with a weary smile, then motioned toward a chair, and vanished into another room, while Jack swaggered off down toward the store. As I sat musing I wondered how fared it with this little woman with the big soul reflected from her eyes and gentle smile. If appearances and rumor meant anything, then here was a saint living among devils with no hopes of the regeneration of same. Presently she came out and said, "Son, your room is ready. Fetch your bag and I will show you."

She closed the door behind us, placed her little thin hand upon my shoulder and said, with tears in her eyes, "Son, you don't look like you are all bad, why have you come here?"

"Mother Kantrell, I had to come here or leave my own dear mother farther than I wish while I am yet in my youth." Then after I had related the conditions of the situation, she said, "For God's and that mother's sake, please take your bag and slip out of the back door here and run. Run for your father's house and stay there till you are old and gray rather than stay here under the influence of these men. True, they are my men! My mortal fate is sealed. I am resigned but if I can advise a mother's son, I will."

Here old Kantrell stalked into the house and stormed, "Here there, young feller, come out o' that and chop up some wood. Time to do up the chores, feedin' and everything. Got to learn to make it snappy around here. Tilda, what did ye do with the axe?"

"Does Mrs. Kantrell chop the wood?" I asked.

"None of your damn business, young man, and I may as well tell you right now, your prattle stops short off from now, see?"

"No, Mr. Kantrell, I don't see, and I might as well tell you now as any time, that I am not the least bit afraid of you; and that I am a white boy, born of the best people of my community and I am not going to take a thing more from you than I would from anybody else. If you don't think we can get along say so and I will go west and fight the Indians." This was in the spring of 1887, and I was but eighteen; but I was determined not to let the old wretch abuse me.

We stood glaring at each other for two minutes. The steel-like points of vision seemed to sparkle as they met midway between us. But I out stayed him and he dropped his eyes to my feet and said, "Look here, boy, who the hell are you anyhow?"

"I am little Jim Wilson, son of William Wilson and nephew of Big Jim Wilson."

"Wait a minute, do you mean to tell me that you are a nephew of Big Jim?"

"Sure, what about it?"

"Oh well, you'll do."

He turned and walked away. For some time I couldn't puzzle out what had changed his attitude so quickly. Then the cause was revealed all at once. My uncle in his day had been as famous as a bad scrapper as old Kantrell, but in a different way, however. Uncle Jim had been always fair, honest, and above board in his dealings and scraps. He never had to defy the officers of the law to keep out of jail.

At supper, I perceived a change in the attitude of the old Block and the Chip, from disdain to some respect for me. Instinctively, I knew both were leering at and studying me with all the discernment they were capable of. Supper over, the Chip invited me to ride over with him visiting his sweetheart. I accepted. The girl's name was Sola Powers. She lived with her brother, Robert, about five miles up the river. I found that she was a sweet, pretty girl and though the Chip was a handsome, smooth, regular featured rascal, I could not understand why this girl couldn't see the very spirit of a leering devil oozing out of him all over like a halo of sulphuric vapor. She was simply fascinated, as a snake charms the innocent wren, and I pitied her. On our way back, the Chip informed me that he and the girl were engaged to be married in the near future. I remained silent for so long, the Chip began to squirm around in his seat, then blurted out,

"Well, why don't you say something? What do you think of her?"

"I think she is a sweet girl and that you ought to let her alone, Jack."

"For Cripes' sake why, fool?"

"Take a look at your mother for the answer. I can't say as yet, whether your father and you are actually cruel to her or not, but she is the mere shadow of a good little woman. She is over-worked or spiritually depressed, perhaps both. I do not know whether you put upon her, but you are indifferent. Your eternal outlawery and killings for one thing, is giving her this living-dead look and you know it."

"H—I, what is it to you?" roared the Chip, "and what has that to do with my marrying Sola?"

"It has a lot to do with it, Jack. Your father gradually became bad. Your mother received her bitter fate by degrees. Your wife will come into your household at its worst, and she won't stay. If she did stay, she would soon be as your mother is, and it isn't fair."

"Say, you are insulting to the limit. You have no more congeniality than a jackass, and I have put up with enough of your line of talk, do you understand?"

"You invited it; I had as well say it as to think it, hadn't I? I usually speak what I think when I know I am right. You and your daddy had better

get it into your beans that I am able to take care of myself as far as you two are concerned, for I don't dread you, see?"

The Chip maintained a "loud" silence the rest of the way home, but I knew hate and revenge was rankling deep. I had made up my mind to go if they showed the least sign that they wanted me to, and if I stayed, I resolved to monkey-wrench every cog of their cussedness I could. I was somewhat disappointed in this pair. I had been under the impression at a distance—that they had some good traits and a lot of friends but now I could discern no good traits and concluded that they had no friends except through awe and intimidation.

CHAPTER II.

The Block and the Chip.

The next morning the Block showed me around the place and pointed out the different work I was supposed to do. Fire the engine for the mill on Wednesdays and Saturdays, tend the garden and truck patches, keep wood ready for use, carry the mail from his post-office in the store to Flatwoods, twelve miles away, on days the Chip couldn't go, and carry a small boat load of "goods" across the river late each evening.

So, for some evident purpose, they had determined to keep me, despite my reckless denunciation of their cussedness, and I wondered what sort of goods they delivered over the river late every evening. The first trip over I learned that it was Wild-Cat whiskey and a few days later, I learned that the liquor was made on the farm in a cave not a mile away. The river being the county line, this liquor was put over and distributed all over west Tennessee. Here I was aiding in illicit traffic against the laws of the state and government. Then I began to study ways and means to break up this buzzard's nest of iniquity. So I worked and "seemed" to like it.

One morning after I had been here five or six weeks, a steamboat landed and put off a sick negro. As I came down from the house I saw old Kantrell jerk the negro to his feet and march him up the river bank. When they were out of sight behind a large boulder, I heard a pistol crack. I walked along the bank to the boulder and saw the old Block rolling the negro into the river. I never had such revolting thoughts of a man as I had for this old scoundrel then. He straightened up from his finished job as I came up and said, "What are you doin' nosin' around here?"

"What did you murder that negro for?"

"Why, he had the smallpox, that's why. You get on about your work or I'll sling you in after him, do ye hear me?"

"No, you won't Mr. Kantrell. You might start something with me, but you are not certain how able I am to defend myself, and what I might do to you."

My hand was in my pocket on my gun and he knew it, but he didn't know just how quick I could kill him. He smiled a sickly artificial grimace and started on saying, "Aw, Jim, go on to work. We ought to be able to get along better than this. I can help you to real money if you let me."

I thought it best not to make any reply. I went doggedly about my work. That evening when I came in from work I saw the Block and the Chip



I WALKED ALONG THE BANK TO THE BOULDER.

practicing with their pistols with several spectators looking on. As I walked up, the Block said, "Here Jim, take a hand with us. Ought to learn to shoot. Might get in a tight sometime."

Yes, thought I, that's just the purpose of this match. You want to find out just how well I can shoot already. But I said aloud, "Alright, Boss, I would like to learn how to shoot even if I never have cause to use the qualification."

I had a small blue 38 Smith and Wesson that I thought more of than a boy does of his dog. They were shooting at the head of a barrel. There was a one pound tomato can lying about twenty steps away.

I said, "Fellows, let's clean up the yard first." Snatching my gun from my pocket, I danced that can all over the place never missing it a single shot. Then I walked to another can, threw it up and shot it full of holes before it struck the ground. Then I laid five empty cartridge shells along the top of a hitch rack, stepped back and shot them all off, stuck my little gun back in its place, turned and walked up to the house. There was no breath of a whisper behind me, but I knew every mouth was agape with astonished eyes boring me in the back until I was out of sight.

At supper the old Block said, "Well, Jim, you shore can shoot, but how quick can ye git that little pop-gun?"

"Quicker than you can pull a trigger, but really I have to be under stress to do my wickedest. Maybe you will see me in action sometime."

Here I saw that both their faces were working with rage and hate. I knew that I had made them appear ridiculous before the spectators at the match. I knew too, that they would get me if the chance ever presented itself. I knew, however, that they would wait for some semblance of a cause so that the deed would seem at least partly justified before the people. Not so with a common place rounder as they usually shot those with impunity. I knew that this pair would try to get me in a way that would add to their laurels as gunmen. Well, I kept my eyes open like a one-eyed puppy watching three rat holes at once.

Late one evening I was met by two strange men across the river. I would not let them have the liquor. They put their guns in my face and ordered me out of the boat. I said, "Gentlemen, if you will assure me that you are officers, I will assure you of my aid eventually to clean up the nest across yonder."

Whereupon one of the men threw back his coat lapel and showed me his star of authority. We had a few minutes talk and after they had directed me where to write them when I was ready, they slipped off through the bushes. Presently the regular dealers appeared and asked who the fellows were that had just left. I replied that they were some

fellows asking how far it was to Perryville, Tenn. They looked rather uneasy, but finally seemed to swallow it and went away with the contraband. Well that was that. My generator of plans was starting to hum.

The morning after, I was up early and strolled down toward the warehouse, where I saw an Irishman sitting down by the side of the house. His attitude showed that he was sick.

"What's the matter, Pat?" I asked.

"Faith, an' me got the measles. The dom Cap'n threw me off here."

"H—I fire, Pat, get—"

I heard the shuffling of feet behind me and there came the old Block and the Chip.

"Hey there, Jim, who is that? And what is he doing here?" the old Block bawled.

I was almost sick with despair and fear for this poor sick mortal before me. I could not stand here and see this man led off and shot like a dog, and yet I was not ready to clash arms with this pair just at this time. Then of a sudden a plan shot into being and I stepped up to the man with my body between him and the pair and began to curse vigorously, and shake my fist in the Irishman's face. I cursed him for bringing his old nasty, contagious disease to a nice decent home; and I cursed him for everything, till I was most out of breath, kicking him on the shins with every sentence. Finally the

old Block reached around me and jerked the man to his feet as he said, "Come on down here, I will cure your measles."

I snatched him away from the Block saying, "No, damn him! I will do the job this time. He needs it, and besides that, if I am going to stay around here, I had as well be getting my hand in on this killing business sooner as later. Come on here, you old sandy wolverine, I'm the guy that will show you to old St. Patrick. Come on!" and I would yank him forward with more snarls and curses. A few yards down the river I got a side glance backward and saw the Block and the Chip going up the hill toward the house shaking their heads and slapping each other upon the back. The poor old Irishman was crying, begging, praying, and calling upon all the Saints Rome ever knew. My heart was bursting with pity.

In a low voice I said, "Hush up, fool, I am not going to hurt you. Listen, when I stop, you kneel and pray. Then when I shoot, you fall over and lay still, and when I throw you in the river you swim down under the bank to a gully running in from the hills. Then you crawl up that gully to the woods, understand?"

"Yis, faith an' may the Holy Saints bliss yez, me bye. Oil never fergitche fer that."

I yanked him on further, kicking him lightly as we went. Farther down, I stopped, then he fell on his knees and made as if to pray; then I shot two

shots in quick succession. The old fellow dropped over and kicked like a dying cow. I guess he thought it was a part of the program. I picked him up and threw him over the bank. He went under and came up with a spurt and a "Thankee, sor, tell the old spalpeen on the hill when he gits up yonder o'il be thoir."

When I turned and started up the hill I saw the Block and the Chip standing on the back gallery watching me. As I came through the gate they greeted me with a leering grin meant for a smile of approval. The old Block said, "Well, Jim, I believe you are one of our kind after all and we'll hit it off together yet, if you'll be half friendly with us."

I wanted to knock the old rascal cross eyed, but I just nodded with a cold, grim smile and walked past them into the house. The Block and Chip strolled off to the store and I went to the washstand to prepare for my breakfast. While combing my hair in my room Mrs. Kantrell crept in crying. I laid my arm around her neck and said, "Don't cry, dear soul, I didn't hurt him."

She looked up at me with God's own light shining through her eyes and said, "God bless you, my dear boy. Don't let them lead you wrong. Better go back to mother. They will break your morals or your body. God forbid, I do pray."

Then the poor little soul trotted out to set my breakfast. She was happy in her soul because the

deed had not been done after all, but the shock before she knew, had been too much for her in her now frail condition. She retired that night never to arise from her bed again. In just a few days she was gone. The only signs of grief shown by that husband and son, was a morose sullen expression of face. No sign of contrition and regeneration was evident as a consequence of the loss of that dear wife and mother. They went from bad to worse and worse.

CHAPTER III.

Fighting for My Sweetheart.

One morning, two weeks after the death of Mrs. Kantrell, I stopped in the store for something as I was on my way to the mill and while there a young man, Will Middleton, a helper at the distillery, came in and called for his wages.

"Why, what's the matter?" said the old Block, "This is not pay day. Get on back on your job—get out."

"Mr. Kantrell, I've quit. I am going home as soon as the boat gets here. It's up at Peter's Landing now."

"Cut it out, and get out, I say. You're not quitting till your time is out, and you will get no pay till that time either, see?"

"Mr. Kantrell, I am not going to stay here any longer, and I want my pay."

The old Block snatched up a piece of plank and flew into beating the young man unmercifully. I laid hold on the old rascal and walked backward with him till I had the Chip at the desk also in front of me, then I shoved the Block to one side. We had another eye fight for a full minute, then I said, "Mr.

Kantrell, hadn't you better pay the young man and let him go?"

"What business have you to butt into my business? No, I am not going to pay nothin' an' you keep your mouth out of it."

"Reseat yourself there, Jack, and be still. You'll be getting me under stress if you don't be careful. The Chip was creeping up out of his seat with his hand under the lid of the desk, but at my suggestion he thought better of it, and dropped back into his seat with his hand still under the lid. "Take your hand out, Jack," I said. He did so sullenly. Then I replied to the old Block's last; "Mr. Kantrell, I still think you had better pay the young man and let him go."

"I won't pay nothin' and that's that!"

"Mr. Kantrell, I had always heard that you were a gun man, but I didn't know you were as crooked as a grass snake and a cold blooded murderer, else I would have stayed away from here. Going to settle with the young man?"

"Yes, I will pay him for I had rather not have trouble with you, Jim. You've got fighters among your people too, and I don't want no feud with them. Here, Billy, is your money. Now you get out of my sight." So he handed Billy what looked to be about a hundred dollars and winked at the Chip. I didn't understand the significance of the wink until it was too late. As I went into the mill

I saw Billy go around the corner of the warehouse and the Chip come out of the store door. After I had uncovered the bed of coals in the furnace it struck me that I ought to take another look at things outside. As I came to the door of the mill I heard the pop of a pistol and the death scream of a man behind the warehouse. I ran to the far corner and peeped around upon the tragedy, just as the Chip was taking the roll of money out of the pocket of the poor victim. I was too late to help the poor boy now. The deed was done. I ran back to my work utterly horrified and heart sick. The significance of the wink was apparent.

I tried all the forenoon to think what I ought to do. I finally concluded to let things go the usual course of the Kantrell killings, as I could not help the boy now. So when the old Block had gathered his crowd in at noon, with a smirking harangue of black lies he justified the murder of that innocent young man by the Chip. I had already resolved that these scoundrels should pay for this murder with other atrocities all in good time. The young man was carried back into the woods by some of the old Blocks satellites and buried in a box. God! How I did want to kill and kill. I knew I could kill this pair of devils and the "satellites" would flop over to me instantly but my father's reading, "Thou shalt not kill" and my mother's "Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil" would come into my mind and I would defer the seemingly in-

evitable. For my own future purpose I seemed to tolerate this murder and was treated with a sort of conciliatory deference by the Block and Chip for the present.

One Sunday morning I shined up and went a "courting." Where? I went to see Sola Powers, the Chip's sweetheart. Why? For one reason, she was pretty, sweet and good, and I liked her very much. Another and greater reason was that I intended to do my little best to keep her from marrying a devil incarnate who was not fit to wed a sow. I had already made her acquaintance and had met her several times. This morning I was welcomed with a cordial handshake by the brother and wife, and a pleasing smile from the girl, who preceded me into her little nest of a parlor. How neat and pretty she had everything arranged—and there on the little center table lay her Bible. God! this, and then that other scene behind the warehouse. The comparison was sickening. Then again, that wife and mother, the little martyr who had sacrificed her life upon that pyre of sin. Such was the fate awaiting this pure innocent creature. No, by heavens, no! Right then the Chip was marked for death if there was no other way to stop the sacrifice of this girl. She led me to a seat beside her. After a few common place remarks the girl laid her hand on my arm and said, "Mr. Jim, will you tell me the straight unvarnished truth about that tragedy at Kantrell's Landing?"

"As God hears me, I will, dear girl. If your feelings are involved, as they ordinarily should be, I am sorry to hurt you with such revelations by telling you the truth about transpiring incidents and conditions at Kantrell's Landing."

I then told her just what transpired in the store, and what I saw take place behind the warehouse; about the old Block's killing the negro and about how I saved the life of the sick Irishman; that in my opinion all the previous killings were as little justified as those under my observation. I told her about their manufacture and traffic in liquor. Then I arose and walked, while I related the sorrow of that little wife and mother in detail, as I saw it. I added, "Dear girl, that is the fate which awaits you if you cast your lot with the Kantrell's. I hate to see it."

"But Mr. Jim, I am not going to marry Jack Kantrell. No doubt you expected me to snifle and weep over this disappointment in the man, but somehow I don't feel a bit sorry for myself. I don't believe I ever have loved him."

"Dear little one, I knew there could be no unison of sentiment between you, and I am so relieved to hear you say what you have I could dance and sing."

"Well, let's!" she said as she sprang up and laid her hand upon my shoulder. We waltzed two turns and stopped at the piano. We sat side by side and sang, "Let the World Go By," in duetto, and I think it was then that "perfect peace" and under-

standing came into our hearts. Before I left her at the gate I asked if I might see her again.

"Please do," she said, with such a smile that I was encouraged to ask, "Sola, when did you first find that you did not love Jack Kantrell?"

"I think I doubted it that first night he brought you to visit me. The comparison somehow, between a man with a big soul and one almost without any; then I had to keep on comparing. Then this recent murder brought back to memory all the reported killings by his father. Then again, when you related what you have observed, my whole being revolted against both of these men; I detest the thought of them."

"Kiss me, Sola."

"Huh ugh!"

"Ugh huh!"

"Smack!"

Then I left her, saying over my shoulder, "I'm coming back."

"And we will sing, 'Let the World Go By' some more," she replied as she disappeared into the house.

On my way home I met the Chip. He stopped me, and asked, "Where have you been, Wilson?"

"Been visiting a nice girl, Kantrell. Where are you going?"

"Going to see my future wife and what is it to you?"

"Oh nothing in particular, only I think you are mistaken. That though, may depend upon whose rack you aim to hitch your horse at."

He scowled and rode on.

The next morning there was a tenseness of rage on the part of the Block and the Chip that could not be hidden, though I saw they were attempting to cover their feelings with smirks and grimaces meant to be smiles; but for sinister reasons, this pair would have sent me away from there that morning. One reason was, they owed me money; another, they knew I would see Sola Powers when ever I pleased without the chance of interference on their part; still another reason was, that they intended to murder me when they could get the chance to do it and make it look justified. In this last, they were rather leery about what my people up in the other county might be able to do to them. They knew I had an uncle that was twin hell's in a fight; and they knew that I could shoot as quick as lightning, and hit what I aimed at; and that I was watching them day and night. Sola had evidently given the Chip the mitten with his ring in it the evening before. Days passed on to the yesterdays. I made friends with some of the menials of the Kantrells. This was not difficult since the best element of these could not help but realize that I was superior in every way to their hitherto dictators.

There came a morning when the Block told me to ride with the mail to Flatwoods, the lumber camp

twelve miles inland. He stated that the Chip and one of the men were going out hunting that day. It occurred to my mind then that this was pay day at Flatwoods, and that today's mail would carry the funds. But I said nothing and made ready to go. I rode a good gentle horse, strong enough to carry one or two heavy pouches at a cantering pace. This morning I had two pouches, the heaviest across the back of the saddle under me—the other over the horn of the saddle in front. The first six miles of my route lay up Whiteoak Creek which played out up to a dividing ridge. Up near the head of the creek several intersecting small canyons jetted from right or left right up against the road. You would not see these hollows or canyons until you were just at the break of the hill you had been riding parallel with, then you would suddenly come into the mouth of the canyon. This morning as I started past one of these canyons two masked men suddenly confronted me with levelled six guns. My own little gun was pretty handy alright, but there were two, both ready to pull trigger. I stuck my hands up as commanded. I could do nothing else just at that stage of the game. The Chip who made a sorry attempt to disguise his voice said, "Get off, we want those pouches."

I managed to cause the horse to turn broad side to the robbers and slid off on the opposite side. As my feet touched the ground my gun barked under the horse's neck. The Chip's right arm swung down in spite of him. The horse reared and plunged for-



TWO MASKED MEN WITH GUNS.

ward. Just as he cleared the space between the other robber and myself my gun and his both spat simultaneously; the robber threw up his arms and pitched forward, and lay groaning in the road. The Chip had dropped his gun, and was stooping to get it with his left hand, but I knocked him senseless with the butt of my gun. I lifted the masks and saw that one was the Chip sure enough, and the other one of the helpers at the still. I discovered that the Chip was shot in the shoulder and the other seriously wounded high up on the right side. I had a slight flesh wound in the left side as the bullet had passed about three inches along just under the skin. My shirt was wet with blood on that side. I held my hand tight against the wound while I walked on after my horse. Fortunately I found him grazing by the roadside, half-mile from the scene of the attempted robbery. I mounted and rode as fast as the horse could go, and hold the pace. I arrived at Flatwoods and gave over the mail to the postmaster and went to Doctor Cook's office, where he dressed the wound and fixed me up in pretty good shape for my return trip. By the time I was ready to start back, there was a great crowd around me asking questions. I merely gave them to understand that two men had held me up and attempted to rob the mail, and that there had been a fight. Then the constable came up to me and wanted to know if I knew who the men were.

"It will all come out in the wash, Mr. Constable. The game is not yet played out, and I haven't anything to say about it at this time."

"Yes, you will say something further about it, too. Come with me to the Squire's office."

"No, Mr. Constable, this happened just over the county line, and you keep out of it for the present, see?"

So the limb o' the law sullenly stood and watched me ride away. A mile before I came to the scene of the fight I met two men with rifles across their shoulders. As we neared each other I saw that one of them was my old Irishman whom I had saved from being murdered by old Kantrell. The other was old man Anderson with whom Pat had been living and helping on the farm since his recovery from the measles.

"Why, hello Pat, you old red-headed wolverine. I thought I shot you and rolled you into the river. I allowed you would be about opposite Cairo by now."

"Ye young spalpeen, did yez iver see a dead Irishman?"

I had dismounted and as the old Irishman talked he had his arm around my neck with tears running down his cheeks. "We saw the fight this morning at a little distance, me bye. It was the neatest thing iver was done. We were out squirrel hunting and as we kim out o' the canyon opposite we saw the

two spalpeens turn up the canyon across the road and hide their horses an' put rags over their faces. We kept hid behoidn a bunch o' bushes, not knowin' at wance what to do; thin yez came gallupin' along, an' it was over wid in the bat ov an owl's eye."

"But, Pat, where are they now? Didn't you go over to where they were, nor find out who they are?"

"Yis, oh yis, wan ov thim was the young wretch with the old un which wud av kilt me that mornin'. The other wan, Mr. Anderson here says was a menial of the Kantrell's. We got some water from the gulley and brought thim to their senses and Mr. Anderson saunt them home in his wagon, their horses trailin'. We niver let on that we seen the fight, an' they tried to claim that they hed a fight with each ither. I jest wunked at Mr. Anderson an' let it go at thot."

"Well, Pat, you and Mr. Anderson keep the truth of the matter quiet for the present. My game is not quite played out down there yet. The officers on the outside have never been able to get next to their cussedness, but I'm working on the inside and a little later on, I am going to wipe out that buzzard's nest one way or another. And it may be soon."

"But, me bye, I'm afraid for yez. They'll murder yez. I'm a goin' to lay around their door step an' watch the game."

"Alright, Pat, you may watch the game at a safe distance but be careful."

With that I remounted and rode on. My side was getting sore and painful when I arrived home.

As I handed the mail over the counter to the old Block, I said, "Who's sick at the house? I see Doctor Stricklin's rig up there?"

He looked at me with lowering hate for a bit and sullenly replied, "Jack and Pete Riley were hunting this morning and they fell out and shot each other, you understand?"

"Yes, oh yes, they shot each other. For the present, I understand."

As I went up to the house I met Doctor Stricklin, and asked what he thought of the wounds.

"Well, you couldn't kill young Kantrell with a maul. He will be up and about in a few days but the other one will lay low for many days, for he is hard hit. By the way, there is something mysterious about this. Rube Kantrell insisted that I attend to that fellow before his own son. Would rather have thought he would have killed the fellow before calling me."

"Nothing mysterious about it, Doc, if old Kantrell would tell what he knows."

The Doctor eyed me speculatively as he flicked the horse with a whip and drove off.

CHAPTER IV.

Nemesis Overtakes the Block and the Chip.

I went into the house and wrote my revenue officer at Decaturville to meet me at Peter's Landing on the 12th with a fearless man to help us. Today was the 2nd. I mailed my letter on the boat *Nesbit*, when she landed there next morning. A week from that day I was late for dinner. I had supposed that old Kantrell had already gone back to the store, but as I stepped upon the veranda I heard a low murmur of conversation in the Chip's room. It suited me precisely to hear some of that talk. I slipped around to a window right near the Chip's bed. I heard the following:

"No, dad, I had rather make her marry me first and then get him in my own way afterward. She is sweet on him and if he is killed here she would loathe and hate me worse. I will be able to be up and well as ever by the Sunday night of the 13th."

"H—I, I don't like this kidnappin' business. It's out o' my line. Who's goin' to marry a kidnapped gal to anybody an' her squeelin' an' kickin'?"

"We will manage that. Old Squire Jernagan will do anything you tell him to do if you threaten to stop his whiskey. We will manage to have the

girl subdued till the resisting will be over by the time we get her to the Squire's across the river."

"But who's to help us get her? This bunch around here is about as friendly to him as to us."

"I will fix Thompson at the still. He will help me out. You be sure to fix old Jernagan and have everything ready. I will get the marriage license at Decaturville, Tenn. in the meantime."

"Oh well, it's your show. We need a cook here, an' I'll help carry it out."

Here I heard him push his chair back and I knew he was soon coming out. I crept away and around to the veranda again, and stepped noisily upon the same. I washed, combed, and ate my dinner just as if nothing was amiss. Next day the Chip remained up the entire day. I lay that night pondering over transpiring incidents since I had been at this place, most especially of what I had overheard at noon that day. Here they were about to commit the outrage of kidnapping and forcing an innocent sweet girl to marry an unscrupulous outlaw and murderer in a so-called civilized country; and they had the audacity to think they could get away with it same as they had their other dastardly deeds. And, it looked like they could do it too, according to their plans if somebody with the nerve didn't interfere. But would they do it? Not in my life, was my resolve. So the Chip aimed to get me, did he? I knew as aforesaid that they would try to murder me sooner or later but they were waiting for a chance to make

it spectacular and seemingly justified. Such would add to their already bloody "belt" as gunmen, if you understand what I mean. This sort enjoy such reputation. But now their Nemesis was in their camp and deadly determined. On the morrow night I listened under the window of their sitting room, which was situated at the other end of the building from my room. This time I got their plan by which they were to catch the girl. There was always prayer-meeting at the little church about a quarter of a mile from the Powers' residence. Their plan was to grab her as she went home from the church after prayer-meeting. This was all I cared to hear, and I crept away muttering, "Like hell, you will."

On the night of the 9th I went to bed tired and worn out from a hard day's work. I must have slept like a log—dead to the world. When I awoke I was lying upon the hard ground with the world in a whirl. My head was splitting, my hands and feet tied, and my mouth blabbed. Well, this was this. I worked, turned and twisted. I writhed and I strained, but nothing to it. I was tied to stay, tied till somebody cut me loose. I pondered. Now who was the Nemesis, and who's? Yes, I mused they were going to keep me hidden out of the way until after the outrage against the girl. No doubt in my mind that this was the purpose of this chloroforming and tying me up and hiding me out in this small outhouse. Oh, the anguish I suffered to think that those fiends would be able to carry out that



I WORKED, TURNED AND TWISTED.

heinous crime after all. The sweet girl I loved, and me helpless to do a thing to prevent it. Daylight soon came and the hours dragged by on leaden feet till noon. Then the old Block came with water, undid the blab and gave me to drink. As he took the cup away, I said, "Say old codger, what's the idea?"

"Fraid ye might be in our way for a few days. Jest be quiet three or four days and we'll let ye up."

I started in to jeer at and curse him but he replaced the blab, went out and locked the door. For exercise, I could do nothing but roll on the ground and groan through my nose. The evening passed. I was almost numb all over. How I was suffering mentally and physically! Midnight came and I had dropped off into a troubled half slumber, when I heard a tap, tap, tap, on the wall. I started up and listened. Again that tap, tap, tap.

"Ooh," I said through my nose.

"Are yez thoir, my bye?"

"Ooh hoo!" I nearly blowed my nose off my face. It was my dear old Irishman.

"Faith an' they hev yez gagged, ain't they?"

"Ooh hoo!"

"Jist be azy, me bye, o'll hev yez out o' thot in two shakes ov a lamb's tail."

With some kind of a pry he soon had the door open and set me free. I was sore and numb but I took him by the coat sleeve and we ran for a clump

of plum bushes where we sat while he chafed my ankles and wrists.

"Yes, an' it was roight here I sot an' watched him go in an' give yez water. Oi had not seen yez around the place yesterday an' oi knew there was something or somebody alive in thot shanty. At midnight oi crept up an' heard yez snorein', thin oi tapped an' yez blowed your horn thin oi knowed yez was thoir."

"Thank you, Pat, you did not only me, but others a great service tonight. Have you a pistol?"

"Faith an' yis, oi hev old man Anderson's navy."

"Alright, Pat, give it to me and remain here while I slip into my room and try to find my gun and belongings."

They had not thought it necessary to disturb my stuff, so I had no trouble in getting my belongings together. When I rejoined Pat we went around under the hill and sat behind the store house till daylight. A little after sunup I heard the slam of the yard gate on the hill and I knew they were coming to the store. As we walked around to the front I instructed Pat to cover the Chip with the big navy, while I dealt with the old Block. When we advanced upon them, their astonishment was great to behold. I don't think I have ever enjoyed anything so much in my life before or since, except an incident which occurred in the third section of my life's story which will appear later in this book.

They stood with their jaws dropped wide open, shifting their stare from one to the other of us.

I said, "Well, Old Block, and you, the Chip, your Nemesis is still stalking in your wake. But I give you credit for the cute trick you played on me night before last when you took me like a sleeping baby into captivity. I deserved that for my fool carelessness, but for my faithful friend here, I would have been done for."

"But I thought you killed that old devil and threw him into the river. I could swear I saw you do it."

"Well, you've got another think coming, and no doubt you could swear anything, and while I would shoot hell out of you and your sort in a fight for mine or the life of any other honest person, any time you think I would wantonly murder an innocent man like this one here was that morning, you still have another guess coming. I am not built that way. You owe me a hundred and eighty dollars, pay me!"

"But wait a minute! You are not going to quit me and leave, are you?"

"Sure, I am going to quit this nest of iniquity and I am going to leave on the first boat that passes up or down. (I said the latter so they would think there might be no interference with their plan of abduction.) So you pay me and pay me now, see?"

With that terrible hate reflecting through his countenance he went to the safe and counted out

my wages. Pat and I backed out of the door. The Block and the Chip following at our command. We carried them thus for a quarter of a mile toward the Flatwood's road and let them go. I knew that they would get us with their Winchesters if we left them in the store. A little farther on I shook hands and parted with Pat. He went back up Whiteoak Creek to Anderson's; I went through the glades to Peter's Landing and remained quiet till next day, the 12th. Came the appointed day, my revenue officer and his assistant appeared in a skiff from the Decatur County side of the river. We held conference, in which I related all my experiences with the Kantrell's since my arrival at the Landing, including the plan to abduct Sola Powers. The Officer was indignant. He said, "Well, we just got to stop that little game right where it starts. We got sufficient proof for their arrest. Tonight we will go get 'em."

"Wait a minute, Cap'n. Listen, you cannot surprise those two. They are on the alert because they are not sure but that I am still in the country. There will be a fight anyway you plan it. My idea is to let them attempt the abduction tomorrow night and let them have it—in the act. If they are wounded and captured alive alright, and if they are captured dead it is also alright—with me!" The officers demurred at the plan, but finally gave in, because he knew the gang would deserve whatever they would get in any event. We reasoned that with the elimination of the Kantrells away from their ren-

devious it would be much less difficult to capture the rest of the gang and destroy the stills.

We procured double barreled shot guns at the store with some buckshot shells and formed our plans of procedure. Late in the evening of the next day, which was Sunday, we three slipped off into the glades and made our way to the vicinity of the church. On the right of the road running from the Powers' residence to the church ran a field fence lined with plum bushes. On the left of the road was a line of woods. I knew the abductors would attack from the woods. Just after dark we secreted ourselves behind the fence midway between the residence and the church. Pretty soon Sola went tripping along toward the church whistling, "Let the World Go By." We had nearly a full moon and we could see her down the road almost to the church. Half an hour later we heard the rustle of horses' feet in the dry leaves across the road. Then a muffled cough and all was quiet. An hour later the lights at the church went out and presently Sola came along singing low and sweet "Nearer My God to Thee." I thought grimly—yes, for some. When she was a little past us, the gang on the other side burst out upon her. She gave a little scream and took to her heels like a rabbit. We were over the fence instantly. The foremost after the girl was about twenty feet behind her when we fired, each taking his own man. Neither fell at the first volley, but turned and began shooting haphazard at us. We kept loading and shooting till they were all

down. We found that the Chip was dead and the Block and the other fellow in a dying condition. Neither of us were hit. They were shooting with pistols and at some distance.

When I walked up to the house, Sola met me at the step of the veranda, laid her arms around my neck and said, "Oh, Jim, you saved me! They nearly had me. Did you know they were after me? Were you laying for them?"

"Yes, we were laying for them. I overheard them plan to kidnap you. I got help and defeated their purpose."

"Are they dead?"

"Dead and dying, dear girl, but they deserved it. Look back at the unpunished crimes they have committed and what they aimed to do to you, little one. I couldn't stand by and allow them to go on with their cussedness any further."

"Oh, how can I ever repay you for your great service to me tonight?"

"Pay me in part now, and away sometime in the future, I want you, Sola."

She kissed me and I went back to the scene of battle. Old Kantrell died next morning an hour after sunup. The other man died several days later. We had no trouble capturing the rest of the gang and destroying the distillery. I walked suddenly into the mouth of the cave and told them to put up their hands. They did so, then I said, "Boys,

the game is up. Your employers are no more. You are to go with these two officers and if the courts show you clemency, for God's sake start a new clean life and you will out live all this."

The officers chopped up the stills beyond repair; then took their prisoners and departed. I heard later that some of the Kantrell's distant relatives took charge of the property and conducted it in a manner good citizens should. There is very little more to this, the first section of my life's story. I went back to the Powers' home and took leave of the girl of my choice. We sang, "Let the World Go By" once more in duetto. We agreed that we were both without sufficient funds on which to get married, also too young—that somewhere within two years I would come for her. This is not intended for a love story and my readers will probably hear but little mention of Sola again till the third section of my autobiography—in which all is well with us. I went to Flatwoods, where I met the owners and manager of the lumber works, who insisted on making me a present of two hundred dollars for saving the pay-roll in the mail. He also insisted that I take a job with him to which I agreed. After a few months I placed my savings in the bank and went to see my mother.

CHAPTER V.

Bob Disappears—A Prisoner in the Arkansas Swamps.

My experiences with the Kantrell's occurred during the spring and early summer of 1887. After they had met their just desert, I visited my mother, as stated in the preceding chapter. Then, after resting here for a few days, I returned to Flatwoods, as prearranged, to work with the Flatwoods Lumber Company. I had worked here about eight months when I received a letter from my sweetheart, Sola Powers, begging me to come to her at once, that she was in trouble. It will be recalled that she lived with her brother, Bob and his wife a few miles above Kantrell's Landing on the Tennessee River. Wondering with much concern what could be the trouble, I hurriedly made the necessary arrangements and left for the river. Arriving at the Powers' place, I was greeted with only sorrowful smiles by Sola, and her sister-in-law. After a few brief commonplace remarks, I asked,

"Where is Bob?"

"Ah! Jim, that is our trouble," said Sola. "Bob has been gone five months, and it is now three long months since we have heard from him. We just know that there is something wrong with him, else Bob would let us hear from him some way."

"But why should Bob leave home in the first place?"

"We are financially ruined, Jim; this little home was sold out from under us soon after you left the river. We have got to move by the first of January next. We have nothing left with which to pay expenses of moving to Alabama where we have some people. Finally Bob concluded to go to Somerville, West Tennessee, to work on a new railroad which is being constructed there, and try to earn enough money to pay the expense of moving to the Tuscumbia Valley, on the Muscle Shoals."

"But Sola," I replied, "the Muscle Shoals are not over seventy miles from here, and there is plenty of work there at this time. I do wish he had gone there to start with. I have been thinking of going there myself, and I would have been glad to have let him have the money to finance his move, and gone with him." Then Minnie, Robert Powers' wife said.

"Oh! we suggested that very thing to Bob, but he is so proud he would not think of asking even a friend for the advance of money for anything, and he was reluctant to go back to our people dead broke. Poor, poor, dear Bob. Oh, what has become of him."

Here Bob's wife burst into tears and sobs, her little three year old boy with his head in her lap mingling his poor little moans with her sobs. And I cried in my heart. Sola went on then with the explanation. "Bob mailed us his last letter with his wages enclosed at Somerville three months ago. He

stated that the work there was nearly finished and that he would have to come home. We have waited and waited, our money is now all gone, and we are out of everything. We are willing to half starve if we could only find our dear Bob. Oh! Jim, can you not suggest some way whereby we may find him?"

"I will find Bob, dear girl, if he is still above ground. If he is buried, I will find the place, and particulars."

"Bless your big soul, I knew you would help us. He boarded with a family named Culp, out in the country a few miles from Somerville. This will give you a starting point."

"Well, did you write the Culps?" I inquired.

"Yes, we wrote them, but our letter was returned. We then wrote the Sheriff, and he informed us that the Culps had moved. We have hoped that somebody might find out from their neighbors where they moved to and we are sure the Culps could give information that would at least put us on the trail of the mystery."

"That will be my cue, and from that I will get my clew. Now here is my checkbook. The account is three hundred dollars, which I hope will carry you until I find Bob. I have about eighty dollars by me which should be all I will need, since I expect to hobo some on this quest. No, don't protest, it's going to be a lark, and it will be time for gloom only after I fail to send Bob back alive and well."

CHAPTER VI.

Arrested for Vagrancy, and Made a Slave.

Arrived at Somerville, I proceeded to find out the community in which the Culps had resided. A near neighbor informed me that Culp had moved back to Memphis, and that his address was 367 South Street. No, he didn't know where Bob went, but that he had left with three others of the railroad laborers, in company with a "dressed up" fellow with side whiskers and gander eyes.

Alright, I would see what Mr. Culp knew about Bob, the three laborers, Mr. Whiskers and gander eyes. And in Memphis, on the street at the number designated by Culp's former neighbor, I found Culp. After introduction, I said,

"Mr. Culp, I am looking for a friend who has disappeared. His family has not heard from him in three months, and they are very anxious about him. His name is Robert Powers."

"Oh, Bob?" he said. "Why yes, he boarded with me on the works, near Somerville. Fine fellow, Bob is. Well, he went away on a boat with a labor agent, him and three others. He told me that he would write his folks soon as he got settled on his job again. Didn't he write?"

"I tell you he never has written a line since he left Somerville. There is something wrong somewhere. He loves his folks, and never would have caused them uneasiness of his own accord."

"Wal—no, Bob wouldn't do that. Mebby there is somethin' queer about the thing at that. I shore didn't like the looks o' the guy that perswaded him off. Them sideburns didn't hang exactly right and them gander eyes, was a lot too nigh together, I tried to talk Bob out of goin' but he went on an' went."

"Didn't you get no suggestion from Bob or the agent as to what point on the river they would land?"

"Nothin' a tall, only up the river a ways, didn't even say what kind of employment nor nothin'."

I was pretty much discouraged when I walked across the city towards the river front. I had already guessed that this agent had kept the place of his business, whatever it was, a secret from outsiders for some subtle purpose or another. That, together with the fact that Bob had been placed in a position where he had not been able to communicate with his folks, was beginning to make me suspicious of some sort of foul play. I could have no idea how long the search might be drawn out, nor what landing or point on the river to look for an industrial pursuit, good or bad, that would of necessity employ many laborers.

I stopped in at an information bureau; they knew of quite a number of such corporations but this did not help me. I then asked them if they knew of a public works or concern that might be questionable or under suspicion of not being quite on the level. They replied that there were many such among the lumber companies and clearing squads in the Arkansas Bottoms. I thanked them and went on to the water front where I walked up and down the wharves pondering and summing up for hours. Next morning after I had breakfasted I was walking up Front Street still guessing what course to pursue, when I noticed a sign ahead "Employment Agency," I walked in and was greeted by a person with a fat leering countenance, behind a greasy desk.

"What can I do for you?" said a wheezing voice.

"I want a job, and I don't give a damn what it is, anything doing?"

"Shore, gimme five dollars and I will put you on a job permanent; agent down there on the wharf now fixin' to take some hands off on the *Kate Adams*. She starts down river at three."

"Oh! I want to go up not down the river; but say, what does that agent look like? If he is pretty, I might go with him anyhow."

"Oh! gimme the five an' go see—he's got the purtiest long side whiskers ye ever saw."



STEAMER KATE ADAMS.

"Here is your five dollars, I am going with them whiskers, good day sir!"

When I went onto the wharf, where the old steamer *Kate Adams* anchored, I saw to one side a man talking to a small knot of low classed men. The man noticing me come up, turned, and there stood my agent with the side whiskers and gander eyes. No mistake—there never could fortuitously be two labor agents with side whiskers and Siamese twin gander eyes looking for labor twice or more in the same place. I advanced and offered my hand saying, "Heard you want hands for work, I am in need of a job, how about it Cap'n?"

"Yes, I'll take you and the boat starts at three o'clock—the *Kate Adams* here—be sure and be here on time, you want to sign up now?"

"Yes, just as soon sign now as any time, do I get a ticket?"

"Sure, here is your ticket."

I went back up town pinching myself for my luck so far. Well, I was going to where they had taken Bob to at least. I went to the hotel room and wrote a short note to Sola Powers, saying in part, "Am on the trail, don't know what I will find; foul play I am sure, but anticipate nothing but what may be overcome. There is something, mysterious under hand somewhere. Will write again if I have a chance. Be hopeful is all I can advise at this time. Your faithful Jim."

I learned on the way down that our jobs were to cut saw stock, and clear land for farms in the great river bottoms on the Arkansas side, twenty-five miles out from Helena. This put me to pondering a good deal. There could be nothing very strange about Bob working down here, only the fact that his communications were never allowed to reach the mails. He was either dead or under restraint, and that was all there was to it. Thirty-six hours after leaving Memphis, we landed at Helena, Arkansas. I noticed that only three of the other fellows who started with us were landed. The others had evidently slipped ashore at other landings above, and beaten their fare. The agent swore and fumed, but to no purpose, this squad had practically all vanished. The agent led the way up to town, which I discovered was the dirtiest hole I ever saw, and inhabited mostly by the lowest of humanity. This was many years ago; it is said that Helena is now a pretty good, clean little city. The agent told us that we might rest up three or four days and after that we would be taken overland out to the works. For a day or two I went around with the other three, but I soon saw that I would not lounge in some of the places that pleased them best, so they quit me. On the fourth day there, a big scoundrel dressed in an old worn out police uniform arrested me and carried me before an old fat dirty faced rascal posing as a Justice of the Peace. He asked the officer what the charges were. The reply was "Vagrancy." Hundred dollars and six months in

jail, grunted the old sot. I started to protest vigorously, but just here my agent came on the scene, and offered to pay my fine and let me work it out, if they would rescind the jail sentence. This was patronizingly (evidently) agreed to. Then I was carried by the big officer to a waiting wagon and hand-cuffed to the other three who had arrived with me four days back. Well, that was that; it didn't take more than three shakes of a lamb's tail to see clear through the whole keen scheme. My three collaborators had gone through the same farcical arrest and trial proceedings as I had, and no doubt in my mind now that poor Bob's fate had been identically the same. This was the way those dirty contractors out there got their labor for nothing. Peonage of the worst, boldest type. I learned afterward that they never let a man off until a contract was finished so that the perpetrators could get away to where the grapevine twineth.

The gander-eyed vulture had my pistol in his hand sitting upon the seat with the negro driver, while we poor peons sat hunkered in the bottom of the wagon bed. I had a purpose for this trip, whether it was ever accomplished or not, and said nothing. But the other three cursed old whiskers by note in all the keys known to the devil's discord. But all their cursing, gnashing of teeth, and glaring of eyes only made it worse for them in the long run. When we arrived at the big camp of the works the gander-eyed agent turned the other three over to another guard, and took me to occupy a lock room

with an old hand, my agent saying, "You have been quiet and peaceable, I will put you with one of your sort, and those others will be put in bedlam row on the outer edge of the camp where they are all alike and can raise their hell to themselves."

He shoved me through a massive door, and showed me a lamp and some matches. It was then getting dark. He left me saying, "Your cell mate will come in out of the forest presently; after he has eaten we will fetch your supper with him; you will eat in here tonight."

When he had gone I wondered if it could be possible that my cell mate could be Bob. Pending this possibility, I must manage so that there would be no recognition of each other before the guards. I quickly took out my money, which was in three twenty dollar bills, and split a small slit in the inner side of my waist band and pushed the bills far in with my fingers, then pushing the little knife in after it. Apparently through an oversight, they had not searched me for anything but my gun. I then threw myself down upon one of the old shuck mattresses, my face hidden in the crook of my arms. In a few minutes a guard appeared at the door with the cell mate and my supper. The prisoner fell upon the other mattress apparently worn out from hard toil. The guard set the pan of "grub" upon a shelf and said as he shook me by the shoulder, "Hey, ye can git up and eat now, or save it for breakfast, I don't care which."

With that he slouched out and locked the door. I quickly crept up and put my ear to a crack to ascertain when he was well away. Presently I kneeled down by the other prisoner, laid my hand on his shoulder and said, "Sit up, Bob, and let's talk. I've come after you, hush-hush for God's sake, boy, don't ever let them know we are friends or acquaintances."

"Well, bless God Jim, how did you ever find me? How are my three dear souls at home? Heaven knows, Jim, how I have suffered."

"They have suffered too, my friend, they could not know what had become of you, as they could get no communications from you. They are well Bob, but very uneasy about you. I left them money to help them out for a while, and took to your trail and was just lucky, that's all."

"You was lucky to find me Jim, but that luck sure has played you a trick. You are in the same hole with me now, we are just low down convicts sentenced by a bogus court created by these crooked companies in these vast river forests; the outside world never comes in here except the labor that is trapped and brought in. There is no hope to get away until this job is finished."

"Say, listen, Kid! You don't know me yet, I'll bet you become resigned as soon as they slammed you in here; you take it from me, I haven't. We are coming out of this place somehow. We are to treat each other as strangers in the presence of

every eye, and watch for every chance and plan that presents itself. We will appear absolutely resigned to this fate, and we will see what we will see."

"I have known you to get out of some tight places, Jim, but this looks improbable to say the least."

Next morning at daylight, a guard appeared at the door with what resembled two heavy dog blocks with a small chain about three feet long attached to one end of the block and a hand loop fixed on the other and larger end, by which the prisoner could carry the block when walking. While working the block lay upon the ground. The entire apparatus was homemade. The other end of the chain was locked around our ankle with a small padlock, with the hasp pushed through the end link which had been inserted through another link close to the ankle. Thus shackled with this cumbersome impediment we were led to a long shed where a long nasty greasy table was set with tin plates, rusty knives and forks and tin cups for the coffee-in-law, but it couldn't be compared to a mother-in-law either for strength or purpose. The breakfast was salt bacon, corn bread and near coffee. Negroes ate at a table further up the line. A streak of humor struck my stomach as I saw "bernsides" passing by. I hailed him thus, "Hey, come and pass the ham and eggs; what do we get for dessert?"

"You will get hell and pushed in it if you don't mind out; we don't talk much around here, and we

mind what we say, see?" With that he jabbed me in the back of the head with the muzzle end of a pistol, which painful infliction was registered deep in my heart next to the worst grudge I ever harbored. That morning we were driven to the woods where they were sawing stock for the mills. Fortunately, they put Bob and I to work together. We cut down and sawed up great giants of trees in various lengths. Then we cut up the limbs piled and burned them with the brush, and then grubbed the undergrowth. Teams carried away the saw stocks, and the ground was ready for cultivation. All the other couples and gangs were working along the same process. How many other contractors in those forests were resorting to this peonage system I had no way of knowing. A sawfiler would come around twice every day and file the saws. I hoped and hoped that he would leave a worn out file laying around, but he never did. Days passed into weeks, and it began to look like a chance at liberty never would come. Bob was downhearted and I was becoming despondent and saw that we would have to resort to desperate-hazardous chance if we were ever to gain our freedom. One evening I said to Bob, "Say pal, I am going to be awful sick tonight, are you game to play up to me?"

"Why Jim, what is the matter? Ah! sure, I am game for anything, what's the plan?" We raised up from the saw handles for a brief rest of our backs as I replied.

"Well, we know that Rufus will patrol as guard tonight. I know just exactly how his gun hangs.

I can get that gun in a flash if we can get him inside the shack. I will plant the anticipation of the coming 'sickness' in his mind as he locks us up. I will refuse supper and then at the lockup door I will implant the idea that I may want some soda later. You will go to bed and act grouchy because I am keeping you awake. When I grab for his gun you go for his legs and throw him. The main thing is to keep his mouth hushed. We will then gag him and tie his hands, and go, taking him with us a ways.

"But Jim, how about the blood hounds?"

"They only have two, I will have the guard's pistol, and you know how I shoot."

"Hey, get busy there you," shouted a guard.

"I am sick boss," I shouted back.

"Playin' off, that's all, better git well pretty quick, our hospital is in the lagoon over there."

"Good God," said Bob; "then that's what they do with their helpless sick."

At supper I refused to eat and sat with my head in my hands. Rufus, the guard for this night, stopped and viewed me for a moment and went on. Supper over, Rufus came and took us to our lock-up. At the door I whimpered, "Rufus, will you bring me some table soda and a glass of water when you get the chance?"

"Yes, after Burkett goes to the office, and things get quiet."

Burkett was the gander-eyed agent, and was also secretary of the company.

CHAPTER VII.

We Escape and Even Some Scores.

An hour and a half later I was sitting humped up on a bench with Bob lying near with his arms over his head, when we heard the guard at the door. I groaned and moaned, and Bob stormed, "For God's sake go to bed and go to sleep. I can't get a minute's rest for your eternal damned crying with the belly ache. Go to bed I say."

I was mumbling some reply when the guard stepped in. He doused the soda into the glass of water, stepped nearer and handed the glass toward me. I reached for the glass with my right hand, and for the gun with my left, and I got it. At the same instant Bob got his legs and down he went, me on top; as the muzzle of the gun pressed his temple I hissed, "Utter a sound and I will blow your head off, Rufus. We are going to die right here and now or leave this place, and you will be the first to die if you don't obey my orders."

From strips of blanket we had tied his hands behind him and blabbed his mouth. We walked him between us to a clump of bushes where I stopped and said, "Now Bob, you hold this guy here quietly

for a few minutes. I am going to the office and get my pistol and the agent."

"For the love of God Jim, don't risk that. This has worked so well and time is so precious. Let's go while we can."

"Say, listen Bob, I am going to have that pistol. Here, take this one, and if you hear a hullabaloo back there you go, and go for your life."

I went back bare handed, slipped up to the office and peered over the window sill. The be-whiskered agent was pouring over some office books. By looking slant wise I could see the door was slightly ajar; also see a shotgun sitting just inside the door. The fool, if he had kept the gun right near him there would have been a fight in which he might have saved his face. I crept around to the door and gently pushed. If it squeaked I aimed to make a dash for the gun, having located its situation. I knew I could beat him to it, but fortunately the door did not squeak. I slipped in and had the muzzle pressing the back of his neck before he knew he had company.

"Just cheep and I will blow your whiskers off," I said. "I want my pistol, but first you lie down on your stomach till I tie you good and hard, get down there."

I brought his hands over his back and tied his wrists with parcel twine wrapped many times. After getting my pistol I then blabbed his mouth with a towel I found near the wash basin. Then



THE BE-WHISKERED AGENT WAS POURING OVER SOME
OFFICE BOOKS.

I told him to get up and walk before me. With the shot gun pressed against the small of his neck I marched him to where I had left Bob and the guard. We then put them in the woods road in front of us and marched them for about a mile out of camp. I stopped and said, "Now my gander-eyed yahoo, I am going to pull your sideburns off." I reached up with both hands and picked him like a goose. Then I unblabbed his mouth and asked him if he wanted to fight about it. "If you do, I will hand this gun and pistol to Bob there, untie your hands and fight you till we look like skinned beeves."

"No, no, a man that can do what you have tonight can handle me in a fight."

"Alright, I may as well tell you that I came into this mess purposely, and that purpose was to get my friend here out of it, and it is all up with your gang of crooks, just as soon as we get to federal officers, see? Now go."

They went. We started on along the old road in a brisk walk. We had perhaps gone a mile when we heard a great hullabaloo and yelling back at the camp. We ran on and on, till after awhile we came to a broad bayou. Then we turned east down this till we finally came to a sort of boat crossing. An old canoe was tied to the bank with a rope. We jumped in and started across just as we heard the bay of the hounds. As we landed they ran up and put into the water on the other side. As they came within a few yards I shot them as they swam. Sev-

eral shots from Winchesters rang out from the other side, and bullets rattled among the limbs around us. Then we turned and rushed into the jungle. When we got far enough into the jungle where we walked leisurely Bob said, "Well, Jim, you have sure got the guts for a young devil of your age."

"Desperate necessity is the daddy of hazards, Bob, when we have to, we can do more than we think we can. A he-man does not dread other men; a man's a man, no matter what color. There isn't any super-humanity, though there is a difference in the efficiency of men." So we walked on and chatted of old times. Bob's spirits arose to the cheerfulness of a boy without care or concern.

We came into Helena at about eleven o'clock next day, and went to an excuse for a hotel and got breakfast and dinner both in one. Then proceeded to the ferry, where we arranged for crossing to the other side. Then warning the ferryman to be ready to pull at a moment's notice, we sauntered back up town. In a back alley I picked up an old eight-gallon tin lard can. I put several small cans inside and bent the top together so that both handles came together which made a good hand hold for my right hand. Bob looking on with wonder as he exclaimed, "What in 'ell you going to do Jim?"

"Never mind, you hold your gun ready and stick to me."

We then went onto the main board side walk and walked up same till we came to a lot of dirty loungers sitting on benches under the awning. Among them sat the erstwhile policeman and bogus justice. I greeted them thus, "Good evening, Judge, hello police, where is your uniform?"

"Off duty for the present."

"How about you Judge? Why are you not in your office?"

"Off duty, too, but it's none of your d—n business."

"Oh, isn't it? Well I am on duty. I can inform you of that." Wham-wham-wham and wham-wham-wham. When they attempted to arise, I shoved them back and wham-wham-wham, Bob stood with the shot gun in one hand and the guard's pistol in the other. With the last wham I threw the much battered can in the judge's face and we backed down the sidewalk as I talked. So much for the bogus arrest and sentence. "Oh, you bogus crooks. You're lower down than whale tracks, but you're through."

We turned then and made for the ferry where we jumped aboard as the ferryman started his boat across. About a hundred yards out a gang came on the run to the landing waving their arms and yelling to the ferryman to pull back. I put my gun in the ferryman's face and told him to keep straight ahead, and to speed up, which he did. Three or four

fellows got into a skiff and started after us, but evidently thought better of it and turned back. I could have almost sworn that I saw the gander-eyed agent among them. When we were two-thirds over Bob turned with a twinkle in his eye and said, "Say Jim, was desperate necessity the daddy of that hazard?"

"No Bob, but the old booger man is the daddy of a lot of the impulses of men."

We soon landed and found a liveryman who would take Bob across country to the railroad. Then I gave Bob two twenty dollar bills and told him to go home to his wife, baby, and sister. With puzzled concern, he exclaimed, "But Jim, what is the matter? You act like you are not going."

"No Bob, a part of my quest is accomplished. But I am now broke and the other part of my quest is for funds to replenish by exchequer. It is now the tenth of September, and I am going down the river. Cotton picking is on and then the levy works; got to make a stake."

"But Jim, good God, I don't like this, have you got money at home?"

"I had a little, but I gave it to Sola and your wife and baby. I am interested in Sola's welfare, as you know. You go home and take the little balance of that money and go on to your folks in Alabama. You can get plenty of work on the Muscle Shoals Canal, at this time. I will show up there sometime in the future if I live and ever get enough ahead with which to buy Sola a skillet and broom."

Poor Bob protested vigorously, with all of his argumentative power, but I was firm, and after I had instructed him to stop off at Memphis and inform the proper officials about the unholy peonage in the river bottoms, he took brotherly leave of me and departed for home and our loved ones.

CHAPTER VIII.

Helping a Widow; Fights at the Lumber Works.

It may seem that this, the second section of my autobiography should have closed with the end of the foregoing chapter, but after I freed Bob, I did go on down the river and had several note-worthy adventures in that autumn of 1888. And I must relate the adventures of these wanderings up to the time I reached home again, else there would be more than the four parts to my story.

I walked off the gang plank at Terrene, Mississippi, just across from the mouth of White River, Arkansas, seven miles above Rosedale, Bolivar County. From here I went out into the country and tried to pick cotton, but I couldn't get over a hundred pounds to save my soul, and cotton all over me too. I never had tried to pick cotton before. I soon gave it up and got a job at a big gin. There were but two white families living near the gin: the owner of the gin and plantation and a widow with four children, the oldest, a boy fourteen years old. This boy worked at the gin. The widow cooked my meals, me furnishing my own larder.

One day I noticed that the boy, who was eating his dinner out of a pail near me, had nothing to eat

but dry bread and a little cold bacon gravy. I made him take part of my dinner. The boy explained that Mr. Floyd was only paying him fifty cents per day, and that they were having a hard time to keep up. That night I had a talk with the widow. She claimed that she had to do the Floyd family's washing and ironing to pay the house rent, and that they were starving on fifty cents a day wages for the boy's work. I then asked if she had ever asked Floyd for a raise of the wages. "Yes, I have, but he never would do it. The Liveryman at Rosedale has offered me a dollar a day for Henry, and house furnished, but no one is willing to move me, because Floyd is a bad sort to fool with and nobody ever molests his labor."

"Well, say Lady, if Floyd don't raise this boy's wages I will drive the wagon that moves you. I will beard the lion in the morning and we will see what we will see." I told her to use my larder "till something could be done." Next morning when Mr. Floyd rode up to the gin, I dropped my work and walked out to him, and said, "Mr. Floyd, about this widow woman up there, the wages she receives for her boy's work is not sufficient for her maintenance. They are suffering."

"Well, dammit, what's that to me, or to you either for that matter?"

"This boy is doing a man's work Mr. Floyd and he ought to have at least a dollar a day."

"You had better keep your damn mouth out of my affairs, if you know what is good for you."

"Mr. Floyd, I am not afraid of you, and I am talking about the lady's affairs. She is offered a dollar a day by another party, also house rent free."

"Yes, but nobody ever interferes with my labor I can inform you."

"Well, I can inform you that if you don't go now and offer to raise that boy's wages I will move that widow off your premises." He glared at me with the ferociousness of a hyena, but I outlooked him, and he dropped his head and said.

"Well, say nothing about this and I will raise his wages for a time," and then he rode off. Of course he would have discharged me on the spot, but for the scarcity of labor; and then he also knew that I could work in the lady's interests better away from his place than on it.

Days dragged on, and the widow informed me that Floyd had paid her the same wages on pay day. I then asked her if she would allow me to move her to Rosedale. "Yes, I dread it, but I will do it for my children's sake; but do be careful my friend, he is vindictive and will hurt you if you give him the chance."

I walked seven miles that evening and made a trade with the liveryman for the widow. Next morning I got a wagon and went after her. I carried a good Winchester in the bottom of the wagon bed. Arriving at the widow's house, we loaded up

the heaviest stuff as quickly as possible. Then I stood guard with the rifle while the boy and his mother loaded the rest. In the meantime the foreman rode by and told me that Floyd had rode over to Terrene, and that I had better hurry away from there before he came back. We soon got started, the boy Henry driving the team, and I walking behind the wagon.

About a mile out on the road we met Floyd. He passed on with a scowl and leer which I knew boded me no good if he ever got a chance at me. He saw I was ready to kill him if he made a move. The widow said, "Thank God, I am through with him, you had better keep clear of him my friend; that look he gave you means harm to you."

In a few days I got a job at Ketcham's Levee Works, five miles below Rosedale. This was an awful bad place. Every sort of dirty character under the sun could be found around these Levee Camps, but they paid good wages. Here on festival nights I saw white men dancing with negro women. All the negro women here would boast, "Ah is a Creole," and most of them as black as a tar-bucket. Along on the first of November, one Saturday evening, I was at Rosedale in a store looking at a pair of shoes. I heard some one walk in at the door, but didn't turn to see who it was, but when the clerk said, "Good evening, Mr. Floyd," I started to turn, but was too late. The world went black and I had a sensation of falling through space



OLD FLOYD STRUCK WITH AN AXE HANDLE.
(84)

a thousand miles a minute. When I opened my eyes again with intelligence, the widow was sitting at my bedside. I said, "Why am I here? What is the matter with me?"

"You have been hurt my friend, Old Floyd struck you with an axe handle. The clerk at the store says he struck you over the head and then beat up your body after you fell and would have killed you but thought he had already done so, when he walked out and left you."

I was so bruised and sore I could hardly move. After two weeks I was able to go to work again. I worked on till Christmas morning, then it happened. But one night, three days before Christmas, when I came into camp, who should I see talking to Ketcham, the boss, but the dad-burned, side-burned, gander-eyed gink of the Peon Camp. At supper he sat at the long table straight across opposite me. When he looked across and recognized me, his gander eyes stuck out and rolled around like blue marbles on a saucer. I greeted him with, "Why hello gander peeps, still sporting the whiskers? Left the peon camp I see, well, well, I predicted you would soon after I came away." He dropped his jaw without a single reply.

After supper the government boss, Ketcham, came to me and asked, "Say, Jim Boy, what is it between you and Burkett?" I then told him my whole experience at the peon camp. He said, "Well, I'll be damned; well Jim, he used to be the

best levee man on the river, and experienced men are so hard to get I must keep him, else I would send him on. I would try to get along with him if I were you, and let it all go."

"Oh, I don't aim to bother him boss, if he will let me alone, I just had to jeer him a little under the circumstances, but I am through."

Early Christmas morning, my bed fellow had arisen and was sitting by the tent stove, when in walked Burkett the gander-eyed gink, and jumped on me in bed. He kicked and beat me brutally. I squirmed over and got my pistol from under my pillow and shot him full of holes, and rolled him off onto the ground. I put on my clothes, reloaded my gun and went to Ketcham's office accompanied by my tent mate, who told the boss what had happened and how. The boss replied, "Well, he loaded up with liquor at Rosedale last night and I was afraid he would do something of the kind. If he ain't dead he ought to be. Here are your wages, Jim. Now you light out home to your mother. You are too young to hang around a place like this. Though you are evidently a he man and able to take care of yourself, you ought to move in a better sphere of life than this."

He bid me a kind good-bye and I left him, a stern man leading a hard life, and practically running me off the works, but there was a warm spot in my breast for him for the good natured, kind way in which he did it. I never learned later whether the brute died or not, and to this day I can't seem to care.

CHAPTER IX.

More Scores Evened: Taming a Mulatto.

I went by way of Rosedale to bid farewell to the little widow. On my sick bed in her home I had told her my experience at the peon camp, and when I related what had happened at Ketcham's camp, she was not much surprised or shocked. She only showed a motherly pity and concern for my welfare. When I kissed her good-bye there were tears in her eyes. I never saw that dear lady again, but if I ever get to the Judgment Bar, that sweet soul will plead for me there. So I started up the Levee. There was a fairly good road on the top of the Levee most of the way to Memphis. When I came to the road running from Terrene across to the Floyd Plantation, I decided to go out to Terrene for a few hours and chance a meeting with Floyd. It was just hard for me to leave without a reckoning of accounts with that sneak and blood sucker. As I came into the little town, I saw his horse tied at a hitching rack. When I walked into the principal store Floyd with several others were sitting around the stove. I came near the stove and stopped before Floyd looked up and recognized me. His eyes fastened on mine like a hydrophobed wolf. He slowly arose to his feet. My right hand was poised above

my coat pocket, my left reaching across and holding the corner of my coat down. All was silent as a church at midnight.

“Floyd, are you going to draw, or die like a dog?” He made a dive into his pocket with his right hand, and at the same time flung himself down behind a man sitting near him. This man just as quickly sprawled himself on the floor as far out of the way as he could, which action left the wolf unprotected. He got in one shot, but he was half crouching and missed. I emptied my gun into him. I tried not to give him a fatal shot. I aimed high up everytime and I was said to be one of the best pistol shots east of the Mississippi River. He lay still. I asked one of the men to see how bad he was hurt, after which he said, “Can’t tell boy, he’s riddled, but all pretty high. If he don’t bleed to death, old Doctor Black can get the lead out of him alright I guess.”

“Alright men, do what you can. The widow Morley at Rosedale can tell you about the trouble and you know what sort of a man he is. Please tell the widow to lay the cause before the sheriff.”

“Oh, there won’t be any trouble for you. We already know a few things about this. Better lope shady though, can’t tell ye know. Floyd has money.”

As I went out the doctor came in, but I kept going and kept in the woods all day between the river and Levee. When night came I swung back onto the Levee and traveled far into the night. I

became exhausted and drew off into the woods and lay in a bed of leaves till ten o'clock next day, when I was awakened by a rabble of voices and clatter of horses' hoofs on the Levee. I peeped over a log and saw about ten riders all armed, mostly negroes. I recognized Floyd's foreman and several of his other hands, but the sheriff was not among them. Ah, thought I, mob, eh? They rode on up the Levee. I went further into the forest and walked parallel with same all day. I was nearly famished for food. I had eaten the lunch the widow gave me before lying down to rest the night before; walking a little nearer the Levee looking for some habitation, I saw the mob pass back on their way home, but there were only nine, and I was pretty sure I had counted ten on their way up. Then it struck me all at once who the missing one was. On their way up, I noticed among the riders one Wash Bradley, a Mulatto straw boss for Floyd, who rode a grey pinto. There was no grey among the riders going back. This Mulatto was said to be a bad hombre, so evidently they had left him still watching for me up the Levee. In a way, seems I was in luck to get next to their schemes, but unfortunately it seemed also that I was destined like the flame-tailed foxes of Philistia to scatter blood, carnage and foolishness (if you please) wherever I went. But this was a decree of fate, and not an inclination on my part at all. If my life's story ever comes out in book form the title should be "The Nemesis." To this day I have never had any trouble with any one except so-

called bad men. I never could take anything off of this sort of gentry, nor allow the innocent and helpless to, wherever I happened to be, hence, this history. A number of my fines have voluntarily been paid by my neighbors, and I never was in jail.

About three miles further on, I came in sight of a store facing out on a level with the Levee. I slipped further into the woods so I could come up to the back end of this. When I came near I saw the pinto grazing in a small plot of winter grass with the saddle on. I crept along the side of the building to the front and suddenly popped into the doorway. The Mulatto was leaning back against a counter. I bored him with my eyes as I walked toward him and said, "Well, Washington, here I am, what are you going to do with me?"

The negro's eyes wavered, then fell to my feet. He sullenly replied, "Ah's not goin' tuh do nuthin' tuh yo' white fokes efen yo' lets me uhlonge."

"Yes, but I am not going to let you alone till you straddle that pinto and hit the high places for Floyd's place. Now get going."

"Nah sah, ahs not gwine be druve no whuhs." His hand went into his pocket like a flash, but he snatched it back empty and covered with blood. Then instantly I put two under his feet which made him jump up and down and whirl around. As he whirled I put one squarely across the caboose of his pants. He yelled, "Yas sah boss, ah gos, quit quit, sah, ah sho nuff gos." I followed close behind

till he caught his pinto. He stood for a minute rubbing his breeches behind as he said, "Boss ah can't set."

"Got to, better a bobbed tailed nigger than a murdered white man. Now you straddle and go. If I ever see you again I will bullet knock your simlin head off." With grunts and groans he eased himself into the saddle and started. "Tell Floyd if he don't do better, the old booger man will get him. Good-bye Washington."

The defeated discomfitted negro sullenly rode on and I went into the store and got something to eat. A negro sitting by the stove said with a wide grin, "Boss he was aimin' tuh gitche. Yo' sho' did tame uh wile bad niggah."

I gave the negro a pleasant reply and asked the store keeper how far it was to the next town. He replied, that it was five miles to the next little town or settlement, that I could easily make it by night, but that it was a bad place for a stranger to put up at.

"Isn't there a hotel there?"

"Yes, the 'Buckle and Tongue,' but I think it ought to be called the 'Spider and the Fly.' It is thought that several travelers have disappeared from that house. It is run by an old scoundrel, his wife and slouch of a son."

"Thank you for the information friend, I believe I will act the fly tonight and see what the spider

will try to do." So I bid good-bye to the kindly fellow and went on toward the little town in which was situated the "Buckle and Tongue" hotel where I hazarded some more action by tweaking the nose of providence.

CHAPTER X.

Hotel Experiences.

Between sundown and dark, I plodded into the little village. I went to a store and ate my supper and filled my pockets with something to eat for the morrow. Also I got some cigars, cartridges, other items, then proceeded to the Buckle and Tongue. I asked the old leer-eyed wretch behind the counter if he had a room for me. "Oh yes, yes, we got rooms; want supper?" "No, I have already eaten, but say, is there a bank here? I am a little afraid of robbers along this Levee." "No, there is no bank, but I have a safe here, you might put your money in it for the night." "No, no, I will risk it with me for one night."

I knew there was no bank, and if there had been, it would have been closed hours before. I just wanted to give the scoundrel the idea that I had a lot of money on me. I intended to put the Buckle and Tongue to a test, and if found wanting there would be wailing, glaring of eyes, and gnashing of teeth. He replied, "Oh, just as you like," with a get it anyhow leer of his bullet eyes. Then came in a tall, gaunt woman with high cheek bones and a hard countenance generally, followed by a stalwart strong young lout who was evidently the son from

the blended resemblance to the dam and the dam sire. The old man told the son to show me to my room, and "hurry back." He led me along a side gallery to a back room on the ground floor, then he left me and hurried away. I begun to take observations of the room. There were three doors, the one we entered off the gallery, one near the head of the bed coming out of an inner room, and one near the foot of the bed which led into a side room. Across the side room opposite this door was a window. I raised this window and muttered, here's where I may "vanish."

I then went back to the "reception" room and sat by the stove for a while. After a little the son asked me to come up and have a drink. I refused, saying I rarely ever take anything. He then offered me a cigar. I started to refuse, but an idea hit me and I accepted it. As I turned my back to the counter I deftly changed the cigar for one out of my vest pocket. I lighted it and sat by the stove smoking for a while. Presently, I purposely let my head sink lower and lower upon my breast. After a bit, I aroused, stretched, and said, "I believe I will retire. I am getting so sleepy I can hardly hold my head up." Once in my room I hurriedly arranged a dummy under the cover to resemble a human form. I used some extra quilts out of the old cupboard for this. Then I took the water pitcher and wrapped it and placed it for the head, then covered it up with the top end of the bed cover. I then stepped into

the little side room and pulled the door to, all but a crack, and waited with my pistol in my hand.

Perhaps a half an hour had passed, when the door near the head of the bed eased part way open. A head protruded slowly in and watched for a minute, then withdrew. About ten minutes more and the door eased wide open and the old man tipped in with what looked like a mattock handle in his hand, then the old woman with a candle and the son with a gun slipped in. The room had not been very dark on account of the moonshine outside. The old wretch raised the club over his head and motioned two or three times to get the direction of accuracy, and then struck. You could have heard the club hit that pitcher a quarter of a mile. I instantly shoved my door open and let fly at first the old man and then the son as fast as I could, till my gun was empty. Then I vaulted out through the window and ran for a store where I saw a light still burning. I ran in and told the storekeeper what had happened and added, "You can go over and verify my statement if you will hurry to the room I occupied. I don't know whether there are any dead there or not. I am not going to wait to find out. I don't want to be held here pending a long drawn out investigation, since I know I am on the right side of the tragedy."

So I walked out into the night and kept going till I was exhausted. Then I slept in the leaves until away up into the next day. Late next evening I arrived at a small town on the Levee and

stayed at a small rooming house. Here next morning I found that I had been robbed of every cent I had except a five dollar bill, which I had sometime previously stuck in behind the sweat band of my hat. I found my pants that morning lying out in the hall. They would have got my treasured pistol had it not worked out from under my pillow and down into bed with me. I had refused to go home with Bob, because I wished to accumulate some money, and now here I was stripped of what I had earned by hard work. I felt bad. I was hundreds of miles from home and I was on my way. Nothing but sickness or death would stop me, and I tramped on. My trip home was no ways different from that of any other hobo. Sometimes I told my tale of woe and got lodging, but many times I slept in the leaves. This tramp home is written in my autobiography. But I am now writing my adventures, and very few incidents worthy of note in this volume transpired on the rest of this tramp. I just had a heart breaking, weary journey and finally landed home last of January, 1888. I got some money, recruited my wardrobe, rested a couple of weeks, wrote to my Sola girl, and the widow at Rosedale, and went back to work with the Flatwoods Lumber Company, where the starting of the third section of my life's story finds me. To ease your dear minds, I will say that in the next account I finally take my "Gal" under my wing, skillet and broom or no skillet and broom.

CHAPTER XI.

Fighting at Close Range, Seven Getting into the Other Fellow's Fights.

This is the third section of my autobiography, in which I am chased by officers and serve as an officer later. The second part left me working with the Flatwoods Lumber Company.

After I had worked here eight months the timber became practically exhausted and the mills shut down. The company retained me at a very small wage to watch the mills for a while. One day, in the latter part of the winter of 1888, I received a letter from Rufe Kitchen, asking me to come to his plantation on the Tennessee River, that he wished to talk some business with me. I had known of Kitchen for many years. He had the reputation of being a pretty bad hombre as a fighter, but honest and well-to-do. There was a rarely used boat landing near his residence. His plantation was one mile above New Era Landing, and some miles above the mouth of Cedar Creek. Kitchen's family consisted of his wife, three daughters, and a young married son, George, who lived in the house with his father. Well, I had no idea as to what business Kitchen wanted to confer with me about until I arrived at his place. Then he explained that having heard of

my being out of a job, he would like to have me stay with him through the winter and help him with his plantation, and drive one of his lumber teams, hauling lumber from Flatwoods to the river. To him I explained in turn that I wished to find a position that would be more remunerative than he could afford to pay me on the farm. Replying to this, Kitchen said he would pay me sixty dollars per month as long as I wished to stay. Of course this meant board and laundry in the bargain. I knew that this was far in excess of the average farm wages of that locality, and I first wondered, then became suspicious that there was a black boy under the kindling. I looked him in the eye for a full minute, then with a smile and a resigned gesture, I agreed to stay. I knew there must be some sinister reason for his paying me such a price to stay with him, but my curiosity was aroused, and I had determined to scatter the "kindling" and get the dimensions of the "Black-Boy."

Making the acquaintance of the family, I found them rather genteel and refined. Young George Kitchen took to me as a chum immediately following our acquaintance. As time rolled on here I noticed several peculiar circumstances. One instance was that every window shade in the house was pulled low down when dark came. I wondered, but refrained from asking questions. Then one night, I was kept out very late, my wagon having broke down during the day. After putting my team

away, I was just starting to lift the yard gate latch when I heard a low rumbling of voices just around the corner of the yard behind a clump of plum bushes. I silently dropped to my hands and knees, and crawled to the corner, where I heard the following remnant of the rumble of conversation. "Well, if they are going to always keep their blinds down, there can be no satisfactory results from shooting haphazard through the windows, so we had as well rush the doors and go in on—"

"Hell, no, not with that young devil little Jim Wilson in there; the Kitchens are bad, but Wilson? Good God men, you know we won't all come out again if we go in except feet foremost."

"Well, what are we going to do about it, we can't sit hunkered here all night. We will just slip back to New Era and await our chances, that's all we can do." As they arose to their feet I dropped flat on my stomach and watched them silently creep off down the hill. I counted four men, all armed with rifles or shot guns.

So there were the dimensions of the Black Boy under the kindling. I was hired as a gun man; yet in my heart I had to sympathize with those people, and I had it not in my heart to blame them under the apparent circumstances. Next morning at the barn I approached George Kitchen thusly: "Say George, developments and curiosity prompts me this morning to ask your confidence, and tell me the main reason why Mr. Kitchen has hired me at

such a price to live here with him? You see I am due in Alabama sometime in the spring, and I can't stay on here indefinitely."

He dropped his head for a moment then replied, "Well Jim, guess I had as well tell you, in fact we had concluded to tell you of our situation and let you decide for yourself whether you will stay with us or not. This foul bunch at New Era has it in for us and aim to murder us to the last man. They dread us, and have shot at us at long range several times. We have a young friend there running a barber shop. He keeps us informed best he safely can."

"But George, who are this gang? What is their occupation, and what is it they have against you?"

"They are old Bill Trace and his two sons, Bud and Jim, old Louis Barnstrom and his two sons, and old Jake Strack, seven of them in all. The Barnstroms run the general store. The Traces and old Strack run a wild tiger liquor traffic in a side room to the store. Several years ago they ran their foul outfit up at Peter's Landing. One night they were burned out and run off. They accused Dad of leading the crowd, when really the Kantrell's, who ran a traffic of the same kind between here and there, are believed to have burned them out and run them off because of competition. Afterward they located down here below us. They kept running their tongues and doing other mean tricks to us till Dad suddenly popped in upon them down

there one day and beat up some of them. Then recently at a picnic they tried to gang us and Dad beat up another one while I kept the others off with my gun. They won't come out in the open, but they are eternally trying to sharp shoot us under cover, and they mean to get us."

"Well George, of course I sympathize with you, but I would rather have not been drawn into other peoples feuds that didn't concern me. However, through no desire on my part I was unwittingly drawn into it, and I will not run away and leave two men of an honest decent family pitted against a whole gang of cut-throats and bush-whackers more than three to one, so I will remain through the winter at least." Here old man Kitchen joined us and I related what I had seen and heard on last night.

"We have been expecting something of the kind for sometime, Jim," said the old man. "I heard George telling you the main reason we wished for your presence here with us. I will add that we know by reputation that you are honest, and that when you fight, you fight on the right side, that you are double barreled thunder and forked lightning in a scrap. We know most every detail of your clean-up, up here at Kantrell's Landing, and your adventurous quest down in the Arkansas and Mississippi Jungles. Just use your own pleasure, Jim, as to whether you stay or not. I warn you that I have a presentiment that this gang will get us one

way or another and you will be in danger every hour after you ally yourself with us in this trouble. I beg your forgiveness, but I had no one else to turn to for assistance. The officers still remain out of these river troubles even after the extermination of the Kantrell gang, who as you know, kept the river country clear of officers."

Well, that was that. Here was a hazard fattened by sympathy for the "hunted," and I stayed.

CHAPTER XII.

The Hardest Battle of My Life.

Between this time and the incident of the big battle I cannot spare the space in this volume to write all of the incidents of meanness they did to us. One night George, myself and a fruit tree agent went in our skiff to a dance below New Era. Bud and Jim Trace and the two young Barnstroms were there. They raised a "rough house" with us. In the fracas they were finally pitched off the high back gallery. They left with pistols popping behind them. On our way up the river homeward, we were shot at a number of times as we passed New Era. The agent was slightly wounded and we might have all been killed if George had not turned the skiff further out and pulled with all his power away from near the bank. On another occasion when we were driving home after dark with a load of lumber, a fusillade of shots were fired at us from the brush. We instantly whirled off the wagon on the opposite side, and backed into the woods. Our teams ran away, wrecked our wagons and scattered lumber for two miles. We played upon the spot from whence the shots came from until our pistols were empty, then started through the brush in a roundabout way after our teams. Presently

George put his hand on my shoulder and was leaning upon me as we walked. With some alarm I stopped and asked, "George, are you hurt?"

"Yes Jim, I am shot through the thigh. The bone was not touched but it seems to be bleeding."

"Well here, lie down here, and I will tear up a shirt and bind it up." After fixing him up best I could I hobbled him as quietly along near the road as it was safe till we met Mr. Kitchen who was on horseback looking for us. He had heard the shots. I noticed next morning that there was a seared slit across the back of my coat and one of my mules was shot through the top of the neck near the shoulder. Our friend the young barber informed us the next night after the shooting that he heard the gang come in and "cuss and discuss" the failure to get us. Our lumber wagons being wrecked, and the danger of ambush being so great, we hauled no more lumber. We kept vigilant watch upon every available place of concealment surrounding our whereabouts. At work or wherever we went, we would sometimes glimpse skulking forms and peering faces at a distance among the bushes. Then we would hold a futile conference at the house with no results as to a place of safety or immunity from the menace of this gang of murderers.

Old Rufe Kitchen became a mere shadow of himself from anxiety and worry, and the women folk went about the place silent and troubled.

On the night of the 28th of February, I was sitting at my reading table, when I heard a slight squeak at the window. I snatched my pistol from the table and quickly but noiselessly slipped to one side, and watched. Presently a small stick slipped under the sash and was slowly easing the curtain to one side. I threw out my gun and fired five shots through the window. Then sprang to the lamp and blew it out. When I cautiously peered out of the window, I heard running feet. After a short conference with the Kitchens, I sat watch in the plum bushes with a shot gun the rest of the night. George and myself alternately watched for the next three nights. But not a sight nor a sound of them. Then the third day of March 1888, when I was just nineteen, proved to be the most eventful and sorrowful day of my life. George asked me to take a walk with him, out of sight of the house. We sat upon a fallen log, and George began: "Jim, this suspense is killing my old father and mother, my wife and sisters. Don't you see it?"

"Yes, George, I see it, and I am asking what do you want to do about it?"

"My friend, I am worked up to the point where I am going after them under their own method. I am going on their trail, and lay around their doorstep till I get the last man."

"Wait a minute George, listen! I can't be with you in that mode of warfare. I do want to help you if I can, but we can't sneak on a man and kill

him without a show. That is just what makes them as low down as whale tracks. We are not such as them are we George?"

"Heaven forbid. I hope not Jim. Can't you suggest something then?"

"No, it's up to you to suggest an open and above-board he-man's plan of action and I am with you."

"Of course then, there is only one plan left and that is to go down there and thrust the hive, get as many as we can and get away alive if possible."

"That is very dangerous George, but if you will make one little concession to the plan, I will go with you. We will surprise them, by getting into the store before they know we are on the place. Be ready to start shooting if they start it. If they don't then I will offer a plan of peace and harmony to them. I think I can assure them that the Kantrell gang were the ones responsible for their being burned out and run off from Peter's Landing."

"Alright Jim, that's reasonable, when do we go?"

"That is for you to say, George."

"Well, we start at one o'clock, and for God's sake let none of the folks at the house know the least thing about it. I had rather not have dad in it."

I think George had no hope at all that my offer of explanations and peace would be considered for a second by the gang and I had very little hope myself, but anything was easier on my conscience

than to break in on them and kill without giving them a show at reconciliation. So when one o'clock came we slipped away armed with two pistols each. We detoured and came up behind the store which was built high up on piles on account of flood tide. Quickly walking around to the front, we tripped lightly up the high steps. Opening the front door, we both stepped in together. As I faced forward from shutting the door, George motioned old Barnstrom the boss to come to us. All seven of the gang had been sitting around the stove, but as we were recognized they all jumped to their feet. Old Barnstrom came straight toward us till he was in springing distance. As he sprang at George, he yelled, "Get 'em both boys, no witnesses." The others in front to a man went for their guns and begun shooting. They were surprised and rattled, and evidently shot haphazard without much aim at first. Both of my guns were popping. They were immediately behind anything they could cover up with. A side glance showed me the awfulest tussle between George and old Barnstrom anybody ever saw. George had no chance to use his pistols it seemed. Then another side glance and I saw old Barnstrom shooting George from his coat pocket while fighting with his left hand. I turned my left hand gun on him and let fly. At the pop of my pistol the blood seemed to pop all over George from the corner of the old scoundrel's head. He dropped, and George staggered out of the door, leaving one of his pistols upon the floor. This was all done in



I TURNED MY LEFT HAND ON HIM AND LET FLY.
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half a minute. As old Barnstrom dropped, I walked forward shooting at whatever part of a villain was exposed. There were still three able to fight. One fellow behind a pile of bolt cloth was trying to shoot me with a Winchester. I took to him first because I knew he was dangerous. I plugged his right shoulder and he disappeared into the side room. Then old Bill Trace came out of the side room, snapping a double barrelled shot gun in my breast. I was walking slowly backward still shooting at a fellow behind a crated sewing machine in the back of the store when old Bill Trace clubbed the shot gun and knocked me to my hands and knees with it. I instantly sprang up with my pistol pointed where he had been when I went down. I was as blind as a bat for a moment, but he of course didn't know this, else this tale would never have been told. As he expected me to pull the trigger, he ducked to his all fours and was running for the side room door when my sight came back to me. I found that my right pistol was empty, and took one at his aft with my left as he popped through the door. I had turned my attention again to the fellow behind the crate when Bud Trace came through the side room door. I got one shot at him before my last pistol snapped empty. I quickly dodged to where I had noticed George's pistol, snatched it up and again walked forward shooting. Bud Trace disappeared through the door. The fellow behind the crate made for the side room with his face streaming blood. He was the last man in the store

except old Barnstrom whom I thought was dead. I quickly broke open my pistols and reloaded, then cautiously advanced into the side room or liquor department. Jim Trace was lying upon the floor, deathly pale. I asked him where the others were. He weakly muttered that they had gone to the woods, and that they were nearly every one of them shot.

As I walked through the store the house was full of smoke. I walked up the river about 150 yards and found George lying in a fence corner. He was ashen color, and said that he was shot twice in the bowels, and that he would die. I tried to cheer him, and remarked that I would hide him and run up the bluff after his father. He refused to be moved, and plead with me to fetch his father. I then hurried up the river home, which was a mile above New Era. On the way, I discovered that my hat brim was shot off. Two bullet holes in the side of my coat, and one through my pants, near the waist band, and a seared mark along my jaw under the left ear only. Christ's own miracle could have saved me. In the fight I experienced no fear whatever, but now I shuddered, considering so many shots fired, I could hardly understand why I had not been riddled. I believe today that if I had not fought right up into their teeth they would have made a sieve out of my skin.

When I came near home my heart nearly failed me. Ah, Heavens, how could I tell this young wife,

father and mother that their husband and son lay fatally wounded at the mercy of that foul gang at New Era. Well, I managed to tell them, then I turned my back and covered my face with my hands. I will not dwell upon the sorrow and tribulation of these people, for the tragedy was yet only half over. Rufe Kitchen got his big six gun and we got into the skiff and rowed down the river to where George lay. We found him quiet but so sore and stiff he suffered awful as we placed him in the skiff. We could see that the gang had rallied; most of them stood in the front of the store with Winchesters in their hands, though several had their arms and heads in a sling. Two or three were evidently not present.

After Kitchen had helped me put George into the skiff, he walked off toward the store with his pistol in his hand, the craziest thing I ever saw a man do. Both George and I begged him to come back and wait for another time. He never looked back. To my mind he was crazy. As he came within fifty yards of the store front he began blazing away. Simultaneously smoke rolled from their guns. I saw two of the gang fall, and their volley seemed to knock Kitchen clear around facing up the river again. He started running towards us. I ran up the bank and stepped behind a small tree and began shooting to try to cover Kitchen's retreat, but another volley from those still able to stand brought the old man down and they kept shooting. Then

George shouted, "Come quick Jim, they've killed him, don't throw your life away." Realizing that Kitchen was surely killed, and that George depended upon me to get him to his wife alive, I ran down, leaped to the seat board and shot the skiff straight across the river for the opposite side. The three of the gang still able to walk ran up the bank, rested their guns by the side of trees or upon stumps and shot at us till we were safe along the opposite bank. Some of the bullets struck the water all around us. They would strike and rise again and sing on. Two struck the skiff. Up the river opposite home I recrossed to our landing, and was met by Dr. Tinnon and others who gently carried George to the house. Also our young friend the barber from New Era had arrived. He had evidently been beat up. He told me that the remnant of the gang had caught him listening in on a conference immediately after the killing of Rufe Kitchen. Old Bill Trace, his son Bob and old Jake Strack it seemed were the only ones out of seven who were able to be in the conference. Old Bill had a flesh wound across the caboose of his torso, and Bud had a niche cut out of the top of his shoulder near the neck. The barber informed me that they were going to storm the place and get me that night, that they were going to ring in four or five low down henchmen, two of whom I knew of, one Rock Fry and a Jason Dabbs. Failing to get me, they were going to have the officers of Perry and Wayne County to apprehend me for state's evidence. They

knew that sentiment would be against them, and they also knew that I was popular enough to give them a deal of trouble in court if I made complaint first. But here they were all wrong. I had no notion of lingering in Tennessee to await long drawn out court proceedings. In a short time now I was due to see my sweetheart, Sola Powers, in Alabama. So to save the Kitchen home a storming and further trouble, I sent a note to the gang informing them that I was leaving the Kitchen place immediately; adding, "if you sure enough want to hang, just go ahead and molest these helpless women." Mrs. Kitchen paid me my wages and I took sorrowful leave of this stricken family, after dark that night. If I were writing a novel of pure fiction I never would have brought those people, who were in the right, to this pass, but I must relate events and incidents about as they happened. George died next day.

CHAPTER XIII.

Fugitive from Officers; But Trying to Get Justice.

That night I took a course gradually leaving the river (to my right) and headed for Whiteoak Creek. I aimed to go up Whiteoak to the Ridge overlooking Buffalo River, thence up this to Waynesboro. Then over on, and down Holly Creek, and on to Center Star, Alabama, near which town my famous uncle Jim Wilson lived; and then (after a rest here) across the Muscle Shoals Canal and the Tennessee River to where my girl lived, the entire trip by easy stages on foot, about eighty miles. I had money in my pocket and some in a bank, but I could slip along afoot, and evade pursuers better than on horseback. As I came near my old friend Anderson's house on Whiteoak, I heard the clatter of horses feet on the road behind me. I slipped into the glades nearby and let them pass. They rode a few yards further and halted. I crept near enough to overhear their pow-wow thusly, "He is certain to be near that house. Anderson and Pat McGinnis, his hired man, are said to be sworn friends of his. He saved Pat's life once at Kantrell's Landing."

"Well, Bud, let's call at the gate, get McGinnis and make him tell where he is, or hang him till he does tell," said old Jake Strack.

"That is a good plan, we will hitch right here, and surround the buildings as a group. He may be sleeping in one of the out-buildings."

When they had surrounded the place they yelled for Pat, who soon answered, "Faith and who are yez?"

"Come here a minute Pat, we want to ask a few questions."

After a minute I heard the low rumble of voices. Then Pat's angry reply, "Faith and he is not here to my knowin', but I do wish he was for aboot a minoot." I had already slipped astride their best horse, and as I heard a scuffling near the yard gate, I shouted, "Say you, I have just arrived. You let Pat alone, he is not mixed up in this. Am borrowing one of your horses for a little night ride. Thank you in advance. Good-bye Pat."

"Good-bye me Bye, may Muther o' Saints lind yez her wings." But I was out of hearing and going. When I came to the top of the ridge, I left the Flatwoods road, turned into a dim little used road and rode up the ridge toward Waynesboro. At daylight I dismounted, wrote a note, drew a tack and drove it through the folded note into the seat of the saddle. The note ran, "Thanks again, for the horse. Hoping you all hang by the neck till you are dead, I'll be gwine, toodle de oo."

A few miles below Waynesboro, I dropped off down a hollow to the house of an acquaintance, got

some breakfast, and two days cooked rations to carry along. I told this man in detail about the trouble, and asked him to inform my father and mother. I hadn't the heart to go by and tell them that I was likely to be chased by the officers. The next incident in connection with this peregrination finds me far down on Holly Creek at the home of my father's cousin, sick in bed. The cousin's name was "Aunt" Nancy Hardwicke. I had been here two days when about dark Uncle Jim galloped up to the gate upon a big black horse. He rushed into the house and asked Aunt Nancy if I was there. Then he dashed into the room grabbed and shook my hand saying, "For God's sake, Jim, get up and come with me quick, they are after you." Weak and sick as I was, I soon had my clothes on and riding behind him toward Center Star. We rode through the outskirts of Iron City, down to and across Shoal Creek, and on through the darkness of the night. As we rode Uncle Jim told me that he had come to Iron City after cattle that day and saw Sheriff Jim Davis with two deputized men looking for me with a warrant charging me with murder and horse stealing. Good heavens, the absurdity of the charge. I in turn told my uncle in detail the whole trouble and cause from beginning to the end. We rode some distance before he replied, "Say, boy, don't you get into the clutches of Davis nor anybody else. Die first. If you don't agree to swear those cut-throats out of their predicament they will railroad you to the penitentiary. For

the honor of our family, neither proposition is to be thought of. Turning state's evidence is cowardly in some instances. Penitentiary for a Wilson is unthinkable."

"But Uncle, I can't kill that Sheriff, he don't know that he is misinformed."

"No, no, don't do that, we are now over the state line. If he follows us into Alabama and corners you, slip him one in the gun hand, arm, shoulder or any place to stop him from getting you, but don't mortally wound him. You may handle the other two men more carelessly if they get in your way."

"Who are the other two, Uncle?"

"Old Fate Denning and John Barns."

"Good Lord, those rakes? And old John Barns raised up near neighbor to my mother too, just you wait."

"No, no unnecessary killing Jim, but it is not necessary to tell you that Jim, we are not built that way and you have exercised pretty good reasoning so far in life, if report means anything. If you keep out of their clutches, things will soon adjust themselves favorably to us."

About two o'clock in the night I became so sick and exhausted I fell to the ground. My uncle carried me some distance from the road, hid me in the bushes and told me to be quiet till he returned, then rode away in a gallop. In an hour he was back

with a quart of wild cat brandy. At this time of my life I did not like the taste of alcoholic liquor, but after I had drunk two swallows of that brandy, I felt like I had money enough to help all the widows and orphans in the world, and could whip a cage of tigers. We mounted then and rode on to Uncle Jim's place, arriving there about an hour after sun-up. We found my dear old grandmother and aunt almost in hysterics. Jim Davis and the others had come in the night and searched the house for me. Soon as we had breakfast uncle handed me a Winchester and led the way to the woods with a quilt rolled up under his arm. He left me comfortably wrapped up in the quilt, in a thick clump of bushes back of his small pasture where I slept most of the day. Late in the afternoon I awoke. Instead of arising at once, I lay and pondered over recent events. Heretofore I had been able to help the helpless and protect wronged ones, but in this recent incident? bah, I was disgusted with myself. That tragedy was the most deplorable and regretted thing in my life. Just then I believe I would have felt a great satisfaction if a runner had told me that the last one of that mob of cut-throats had died with their wounds. That night I slept in a small hay pen near the barn. About eleven o'clock I heard my "hounders" ride up to the yard gate. I slipped out and stood around a corner and watched them. When they had surrounded the house Davis

called my uncle. He came to the door and asked, "What do you want here?"

"We want little Jim. We are going to get him, Mr. Wilson and you had as well give him up."

"I've not got him, Davis. I will not give him up and you will not get him. This is Alabama you damn fool, you can't legally arrest him, if he would let you. You will get hurt if you try."

"Well I am going to make a search Wilson."

"You may come in and search one time more Davis, but if Barns and Denning start in here I will start my two guns to smoking."

Here that spirit of hazards hit me and I shouted, "Here I am, out here, Davis, come and get me if you think you can."

"Is that you Jim?"

"Yes, this is all of us, four or five of us when I am mad, and I am getting mad fast."

"Aw nonsense, Jim, come on and give up, you know we will get you, so why prolong the chase."

"You won't get me alive Davis. Ready to start killing?"

Without a reply they came out and led their horses slowly along the road past the barn talking. I heard a little part of the talk as follows: "We will try to get him tomorrow and tomorrow night, failing, then we had as well return home."

They mounted and rode away, then Uncle Jim came to me and said, "Jim you sure have got your

gall with you. I thought you was a goner and you would have been too, if it hadn't been for John Barns, he didn't have the grit. Jim Davis and old Denning don't fear the devil's booger. Now listen Jim, you will have to get further. I suggest that you cross the Muscle Shoals to the other side, and if necessary, go into the sand mountains beyond the Tuscumbia Valley."

"Alright Uncle, day after tomorrow I am on my way. I am acquainted with some of the people over there, if not with the country." I then told him what I had heard the officers say about making one more effort and returning home. Also explained that I did not wish to leave until they had.

"Alright Jim, in four or five months I will go into Tennessee, get lawyer Bob Haggard and your father and go to Linden and straighten out those kinks there. You keep me informed of your address, so I can let you know when all is well."

CHAPTER XIV.

Varnish and Moonshine.

Next day, I kept to the woods at one end of my uncle's farm, sometimes slipping along near the public road, as I wanted to keep watch upon the movements of my "hounders." I came near where the roads forked, a lesser used road leading from the main road around to my uncle's house. Here I heard the clump of horses feet coming down the main road. I quickly crossed and straddled over a wire fence which ran along on top of a bluff and stepped down upon the first ledge where I could look over and up at the road. With a glance downward I surveyed a way to get down quickly into the creek bottoms if necessary. They soon came to the fork of the road just above me and stopped to parley whether they should take the other road around to the house or not. They were half drunk, and presently passed a quart bottle around. This made me believe they were on more of a "lark" than anything else. When John Barns took the bottle I took aim with the rifle. When he had it tipped to an angle of 45 degrees, I pulled the trigger. That bottle flew into a thousand particles, one sliver sticking through his nose. His horse jumped forward from under his hat and plunged down the

road, John yelling at every jump. The others plunged after him and they all kept going. I sent a dozen Winchester bullets clattering among the brush on each side of them as they went. I picked up the hat and walked on toward the house. Uncle Jim had heard the shots and I met him running toward the scene with his two guns buckled around him. When he saw the hat and heard the explanation of the incident he laughed and roared, and belled till they heard him at the house. Months afterward when he went into Tennessee to straighten out the snarls of my bad luck with the New Era gang, he took that hat along. Arriving at Waynesboro he found Davis, Barns, and Denning all sitting among the loungers in front of the livery stable. He walked up and said, as he threw the hat in Barns face, "There is your old Sunday hat Barns, you swapped it for your pin head, and you got away with the head just in time. I am going down and straighten up that charge of murder and horse stealing. Pooh, how many of you believe that lie?"

A dozen men sprang to their feet saying in a chorus, "Hell, none of us ever have believed it. You will have no trouble straightening out that mess, they are all either killed or gone. That young barber down there killed Bud Trace and shot old Jake Strack for beating him up. What with little Jim's and the barber's bullets they all got their dose first and last."

From wounds received in the fight with Rufe Kitchen and myself two of the gang had died. I

always thought that Kitchen got them, because I had seen two of them fall when Kitchen was shooting just before he himself was killed. On the morning after the bottle incident, I took leave of my uncle, aunt, and grandmother and crossed over into the Tuscumbia Valley. I found my sweetheart living with her widowed mother, since her stepfather had died. She owned a small farm two miles out from the river, twelve miles above Tuscumbia and Sheffield. Work on the Canal was at a standstill at this time, and Sola's brother, Bob Powers, was also tending a small farm. After Sola and myself had talked over my recent trouble, we concluded that the situation was a little too doubtful for us to wed at this time, and set our wedding date forward to Thursday after Christmas, which would give conditions back home eight or ten months to adjust themselves. I was not weighted down with money, but I had enough now to buy Sola a skillet, broom, and a pot, also pot hooks. I got a job on the farm with Dr. Carter. He was a cousin to my sweetheart's mother, Mrs. Lemay. He was a gentle stately grand old man, and a first cousin to Mr. Carter of the Carter & Dunbar Shoe Company, of Nashville. I worked with the old doctor till August, then slipped into Tennessee to visit my mother and father, on which occasion I found that all had been satisfactorily adjusted and that there was nothing whatever against me at Linden except the good will of all the good people. Starting back to Alabama, I stopped for a few minutes in

Waynesboro. I found Jim Davis, old Denning, and John Barns still sitting in front of the livery stable. I say "still sitting;" maybe they did go to the house for dinner or to sleep. Anyway, here they sat. Walking up to Davis I said, "Davis I don't think you acted like a very nice considerate sheriff when you picked these two objects of pity and chased me over into another state to try to drag me back to answer to the absurd thing I was charged with."

"But Jim, I didn't know the true situation down in Perry County. I just got a message to catch you. We don't want any trouble with you."

"No, I am well aware that you don't want any trouble with me, and listen, don't you three guys ever cross me again, see?" Then with a thrust of my neck I left them.

Back in Alabama, there would be nothing to do till cotton picking opened up, and I could not pick cotton. I took a notion to try the varnishing trade. To this day, I do not know how nor why I conceived such a darn fool idea. Sola Powers, my wife to be, was happy to hear that I was clear of all charges in Tennessee. But we did not change our wedding date, as it was only a few months off now anyway.

I went to Sheffield and purchased a varnishing outfit and started learning the trade, first among the negroes. If I lived a thousand years I could never forget my varnishing of the first piece of furniture. It was a dresser belonging to a big fat negro buckess

with wild rolling eyes, also with nine brats ranging from six months to eight years old. I poured out some varnish into one of my pans and begun to smear. The varnish would run down in streaks and congeal into stiff drops. Then going back over the second time, the stiffened varnish would pull the hair out of my brush. With my pocket knife I was trying to scrape off some of the mess when the woman standing near begun to breath loud and roll her eyes. Presently she exploded. "Yo' quit dat, yo's gommin' up mah dressah scanlus."

"Never mind Auntie, I will make you satisfied with the job before I quit. You won't have to pay for what I do."

"No, but yo's gwine pay me for what yo' does, dough."

I even promised to do that if she wasn't satisfied after I was through. I had already discovered where I had made the mistake. I had used too much varnish in my brush, and had worked too slowly. After I had carefully scraped the hair and congealed drops off, I put some varnish into another pan and started right this time, working fast and finishing each part as I went. I finished the "dressah," and then varnished everything else in the shack, and it really looked pretty good. When I asked the buckess what I owed her she rolled her eyes and said, "Ah reckons yo' done yo' best, ah pays yo' some. Sistah! go in yondah and look hind dat dah do, in dat dah trunk in dat dah tin box and git

dat dah fifteen cents for de white foke." As I was on my knees cleaning my brushes, a negro kid stepped into one of my pans. I made a grab at him to get him out of it and he stepped back into the other. I then went after him on my all fours, but I missed him. He made a flying leap off the veranda and went clap-clap-clap down the path with the whole family after him. Maybe you think I was so bad in those days I never laughed. Not so, I had my fun and lots of laughs, and I nearly died right there. They finally caught him away over in a cane patch. The woman cleaned my pans, and I departed with fifteen cents pay, and fifteen dollars worth of fun and experience.

I varnished all up and down the Tuscumbia Valley, among the negroes and humble white people. I wished to learn the trade thoroughly before venturing into the homes of the more refined classes of people. Then I concluded to go up and work among the mountaineers of the Sand Mountains and Spring Creek, with its several tributaries, headed far back in the fastnesses of the Sand Mountains. While working up the main creek I found a good deal of varnishing to do, but the farms played out, and dwellings became scarcer, the country thickly wooded and cavernous. Walking up one of those canyons I suddenly came upon a cabin and a large bull dog. I don't suppose the dog ever saw a stranger before. He leaped over the fence and came for me snarling with tusks shining. A woman came to the door and stood with jaw dropped and

arms akimbo. As the dog leaped for my throat I drove the toe of my shoe to his jaw. He struck the ground to one side, but he came with another leap more fierce than the first. This time I met him with a bullet right down his throat, then another behind the shoulder. I told the woman that I was sorry to do that, but that she should have called the dog off. She simply replied, "Say Mister, ye'd better git, Bob'll be here directly, an' he'd shore kill ye fer killin' his dorg; he thort more of that dorg than he does o' me."

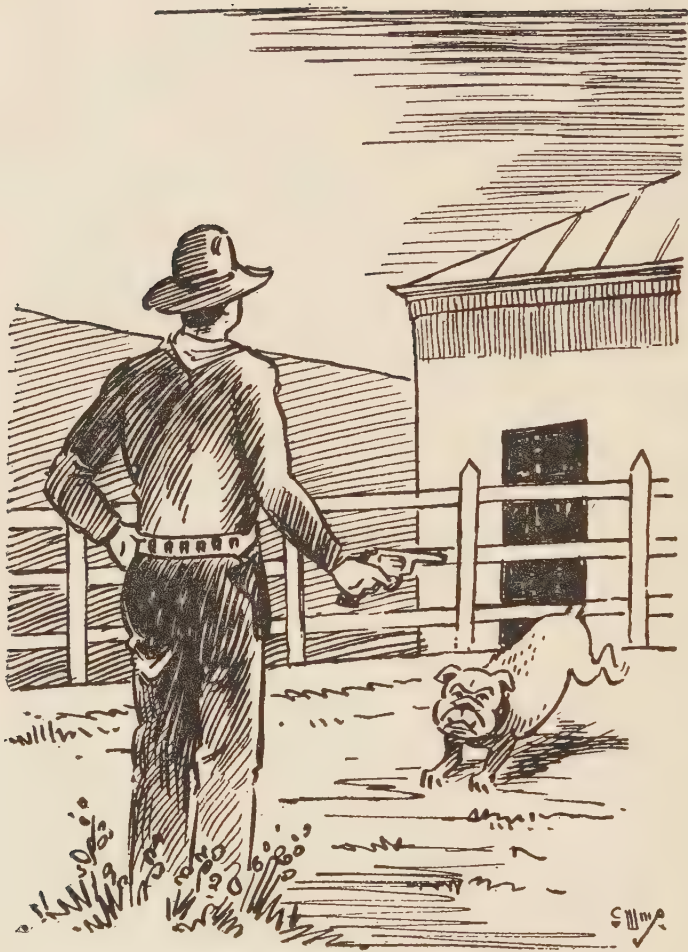
"But, Madam, you saw that I couldn't help killing the dog. I am not up here to bother anybody or their dogs. I am a varnisher; do you know of any such work for me around here?"

"No, Parson Jernagan over the ridge on tother fork mout know; better g'wan, Bob'll kill yer shore."

"How far is it over to Parson Jernagan's?"

"Bout three miles, take that path up the hill thar an' git."

Well, I thought maybe I had better "git" and so I got. I hadn't gone far up among the bushes when I heard some one riding, whistling down the canyon below me, toward the cabin. Peering down, I saw a red shock-headed fellow riding an old mule. I crept back near enough to hear the "storm." When he saw the dead dog, he sprang to the ground, ran and turned him over two or three times and yelled, "Moll! Ho Moll! who kilt my dorg?"



I MET HIM WITH A BULLET IN HIS THROAT.

"Moll" came to the door and replied, "Why a young feller came to the gate afore I knowed he was thar and Tige went over the fence at 'im, and he shot 'im; he said he was powerful sorry he had ter kill 'im."

"I'll make him sorrier, damn him. Which way did he go and how long ergo?"

"Jest a whiler go, he went up that path thar. He asked the way to the parsons."

"What sort o'lookin' guy is he?"

"A youngish feller with store clothes on. He said he was a varnisher, and had a small pack aswingin' from his shoulder."

"Hell, nothin' in these parts ter varnish but yard gates and he knows it. Moll, it's er dead shore thing he's another detecter, er a revenoo marshal and I'm goin' ter take the nigh cut over to old Jernagan's ahead o' him and put 'em all wise. You run up tother holler and tell the men at the still."

With that, he leaped astride the old mule and went on a run up the path passing not fifty steps from where I was hidden. Well good Lord, what had I let myself in for? So "Parson Jernagan, a minister unto souls was also a minister unto appetites was he?" Well, I would hurry over the ridge and down the other fork into the valley as fast as I could, but I aimed to miss old Jernagan's headquarters a mile if I could. I hurried cautiously along the ridge till I came to a cross path. Here I

met a boy about twelve years of age, his face was freckled as a turkey egg. I spoke kindly to him, "How are you sonny? I am lost, how can I get down to the valley?"

"Howdy Mister, yer ain't goin' ter git down ter the valley no mo', yer goin' ter be hung."

"Well here boy, come away from the road and talk a minute, I will give you some nickels to buy you some tobacco."

When we were hid in the bushes away from the road I asked, "What is your name, Spotty?"

"My pop's name is John Beard."

"Where do you live?"

"Down thar in the holler. Are yer the feller Moll Higgins was tellin' the men erbout jest now down thar?"

"I hope not, Spotty. What about him?"

"She said thar was a detecter in yere and that Bob had gone to tell everybuddy, and they saunt me over the hill ter tell pop. My pop's a arful bad feller. Wussen Bob Higgins. He kills every strange feller that comes in yere. They hung a detecter down thar last summer."

"Why does your 'pop' kill strangers?"

"He's afeard they will take him ter Tuscumbia er tear up ther plant."

I saw that the boy was very ignorant and unguarded, so I concluded to get all I could from him so that I might know what sort of a hole I was in.

"Where can I get some whiskey Spotty?"

"Down thar at the plant. I mustn't tell anymore, pop 'ill kill me. I gotter go."

"Where can I find a road that will lead me out of these roughs, Spotty?"

"Don't know. Guess yer'll never git out. Bill Landers is allus a watchin'. He's a bad feller too, most as bad as pop."

"Say Spotty, where does Parson Jernagan live?"

"Over on 'Turtle' Fork, 'bout two miles from here."

"Well good-bye Spotty. I must be going. Will give you some more nickels if I ever see you again, but if they catch and hang me I won't see you again, will I?"

"Yeah, I'll be thar. Say mister, I wanna go wit yer."

"Just can't go this time, Spotty. If I get out alive, I will send you a jim-dandy jack knife by the 'preacher' sometime. Good-bye."

"Gud bye then."

I saw that I had made a good friend out of the boy. He stood at the cross paths watching me as far as he could see me. I had lost a lot of time with the boy, and I learned very little except that probably I would never get out of those roughs alive. The sun was low and I had begun to think of leaving the woods road to find a bed of leaves for the

night. A little further on, and a low whistle sounded at my back. I whirled around and found a long big bored rifle levelled at my head. Another low whistle and I whirled to find that I was covered from behind. The two other men came up from either side with levelled guns. I noticed that one of them was the shock-headed Bob, the owner of the dead bulldog. He said, "Wal Mr. Dorg killer, we gotche ain't we?"

"Yes, but you can't eat me. You know I never killed your old dog for fun. I am a varnisher."

"Varnisher hell, that's a lie. What do yer think yer cud varnish up in here, a fence rail?"

"Well, here is my pack, look it over and see if it is not a varnishing outfit."

"Oh, yer cud pertend ter be er varnisher, an' be somthin' else. Where are yer from?"

"I am from Sheffield."

They gave each a significant glance, and the one they called Bill Landers said, "That is whar the inquiry started last year about that detector what got lost in these here woods, and thar is whar the deputy Marshal lives, so Mat Roper says."

It developed later that Mat Roper was a saloon keeper in Tuscumbia and handled all of this gang's moonshine liquor, old Parson Jernagan as go-between and boss of the distilling end of the enterprise. In reply, I said, "Men, I don't mean any harm to you people by being up here, I am sorry I

had to kill the dog, and I've got the money to pay for him. Your wife told you how the thing happened."

"She did, did she? Did yer hear her? Well, that settles it, yer heard other things too didn't yer? Listenin' in the bushes eh? Wal, yer couldn't pay me fer my dorg in a hundred years. Ef I didn't kill yer fer nosin' I would kill yer fer shootin' my dorg."

They had already taken my gun, money, and pack from me, and I had no show to hazard a fight for my life, and my chance was hopeless. I made one more appeal. "Are the other three as bad and heartless as this so called man here? Do you intend to stand here and see me murdered without a show to fight for myself? Why not six months ago I was a fugitive from the officers myself?"

"Hell, ef yer heard Bob's and Moll's pow wow, we are all in ther same boat an' thar ain't no hope fer yer. Come on out yer in the bushes where we can cover up the blood. Bob, you can do the shootin'."

They all laid hands on me and started from the path with me. Then I turned into a threshing machine so sudden and vigorous was my resistance that I had two of them down and was manhandling the other two in pretty good defense when a fifth man running up the path took a hand and they were soon sitting upon me, all of us breathing hard.

Bob and another were sitting half dazed to one side, one with his jaw fractured, and the other with an eye blackened and swelling fast. The last comer was John Beard, Spotty's "pop."

CHAPTER XV.

My Narrowest Escape.

Presently they arose off me and pulled me to my feet with two men holding onto each arm. Then the fellow Beard said, "Heve ye proved up on him?"

"Shore, we've proved up on 'im, and we started to take 'im into the bushes thar ter kill him, when he exploded amongst us like double barrellled thunder and forked lightnin' he shore is a scrapper alright. Better git out thar in front o' him Bob and shoot 'im while we hold him."

"Hell no," said Beard. "He ain't goin' ter be shot till the parson has a talk with 'im. The parson wanted a pow wow with the next noser we caught in yere, and he's goin' ter have it. Take him down to ther plant an put 'im in the lock-room, an' I'll send Spotty after the parson."

After much snarling, cursing, and argument, Beard won his point and I was dragged to the still house lock-room and locked in. They left a guard sitting against a tree near the door and went off toward a high water fall where a cave seemed to lead in under a bluff. The cabin was built of logs, the floor and ceiling of split slabs spiked down. The hearth consisted of two broad thin rocks. Through

cracks in the floor I could see that there was a cellar nearly as large as the room above. This was nearly filled with barrels. As they brought me to the cabin I noticed that the space between the sill and ground was walled with rock. I slipped to the hearth and tried one of the rocks. I saw that I could turn it up out of its fitting. I went to the door and asked the guard to fetch me something to eat. He told me to go to hell. The dastard refused a hungry man a bite to eat, and I had always heard of the big heartedness of mountaineers.

About nine o'clock in the night the parson arrived. They unlocked the door and crowded into the room and sat around against the wall, nine or ten, in all. A lantern was placed in the middle of the room. Then the "parson" came in and sat upon a box placed near the door. He was a tall gaunt fellow, clean shaven, except a bunch of whiskers hanging from his chin. It had been dyed black. His hair was cropped straight around at the upper edge of his collar and he wore a long clerical black coat. He had a twang to his voice which issued mostly through his nose, though he used very good language. With his sinister gaze fixed upon me, he asked me a hundred questions. He was evidently trying to get the name and description of the deputy United States Marshal at Sheffield. Of course I knew nothing about him at all. The parson offered to set me free if I would give him the desired information. I knew the old scoundrel was lying. I reaffirmed that I knew nothing of any revenue

officers. He finally gave it up and snarled, "You hang at sun-up. Boys, I will be over here by that time if I can. If I don't just go ahead with the hanging, if he hasn't agreed to tell what we want to know."

A little while after they had all gone but Bill Landers, who had been left on guard, I was sitting against the wall when I heard some one whisper through a crack close to my head, "I'll stay wit yer mister." It was Spotty. I turned my head and whispered back, "Listen Spotty, in about an hour you slip back to the opposite side of the cabin from the guard, remove some rock and make a hole under the sill. Don't make a bit of noise, if you do it is all up with me."

"All hunky, you git down inter ther cellar." Presently I crept to the front and peered out and saw Bill Landers, the regular patrolman for the plant sitting against a tree, a rifle across his lap and his head dropped over his knees, apparently dozing. Then I crept on my hands and knees to the old fireplace and gently lifted one of the slabs of stone straight upon its edge. Now to let it down upon the floor without noise was very difficult. But my life depended upon noiseless operation and I finally accomplished the hazardous feat. Then I quietly slipped through the opening into the cellar. After a short wait I saw a patch of skylight growing larger and larger. Between the old chimney and corner of the cabin, I crept to this and silently removed some

rock and placed them upon the floor of the cellar and thus helped Spotty to enlarge the opening. Finally I crawled out into the blessed fresh air of the night. I took Spotty by the hand and ran quietly with him to the thick bushes, thence up the steep hill to the cross paths, Spotty leading the way. We were out of breath and our tongues were out like dogs. How I hugged and patted and thanked that red headed freckled boy. Then I gave him my pocket knife. I knew he would treasure a knife above all things, but he said, "Ain't yer got no mo' nickels?" "No Spot, they took my money, my pistol and everything. If you will find who's got my pistol and steal it and hide it till I come for it, I will give you twenty nickels. Will you do this for me?"

"Shore, but say mister, I'm a gud mine ter go wit' yer, please lemme go."

"No Spotty, my boy, I've got to have that pistol, and you're the only one that can get it, see? Now good-bye Spotty and be a good boy."

"Gud bye Mister, be careful when ye come back."

So I left this good hearted boy standing in the darkness gazing after me. I have wondered if such a boy with such environments is given a chance for the development of his big soul in the beyond somewhere somehow. I rushed silently along the path, till it turned down the mountain side toward what seemed to be a creek run. Down the creek a ways I saw a light shining through a window. I

quietly detoured this house, which I supposed to be the residence of Old Jernagan, and went on down this branch of Spring Creek to the fork where I saw a little church. Near this I went into a farmhouse and got some breakfast. I asked the lady who preached at the church. "Why Brother Jernagan from up Turtle Fork preach thar twice a month. He preached last Sunday and come Sunday week he preaches again. An' he shore do tell 'em the gospel truth too."

This being Saturday, it would be about nine days till Jernagan's next preaching day. On that day I resolved to expose a hypocrite. I travelled on into Sheffield, rested over Sunday, and on Monday morning went to the office of a Mr. Winston, a revenue officer, and laid my whole experience in the mountains before him. I will say here that I would in no wise have done this if those mountaineers had treated me like a fellow man instead of like a dog. Besides, they had robbed me of what money I had with me and my treasured pistol. I would not have exchanged that pistol for a gold "nigger." Winston made me his first officer, after which we got together several other men of a fighting quality, and on Saturday evening late, we started for the mountains, all well armed for business. By two o'clock in the night we arrived within half a mile of the distillery where we halted for conference and reconnoitering. Leaving the others here, I slipped off down a small ravine, which led right near to the distillery. When I was near enough, I saw that

the men were very busy, and presently discovered that they were moving the plant. They were loading parts onto two wheeled carts. When all the carts were loaded they drove off down the canyon leaving Bill Landers on guard. Before Bill knew it, I had the muzzle of a gun pressing against the small of his back. "Drop that gun Billy and reach up, or I'll blow you in two."

"Huh, sneaked back did ye?"

"Yes Bill, and I've got plenty of company up there a little ways. Let's go."

I picked up his gun and marched him up the gulley to where my friends were waiting. Then leaving the prisoner well tied in charge of one of our men, we crept down and secreted ourselves about the old plant. About daylight several men came back with the carts and begun loading again. We sprang from cover and arrested them in a bunch, then sent them on to our rendezvous up the gulley, three of us remaining on the watch. After a little while Bob Higgins and John Beard came up the canyon driving carts. As they stopped, we confronted them with levelled guns. I ordered their hands up, but they grabbed for their pistols. Beard's pistol arm was shattered by me and Winston shot Bob Higgins down just as he aimed the second time at me, his first shot having grazed the skin under my right arm and splitting a slit in my shirt. Beard was carried and handcuffed to the others. I knelt and examined Bob's wound. He said, "I am done fer young feller, but I am to blame."

"Bob, I am sorry for this, but it was just as I tried to tell you fellows. I was not out looking for stills and I never would have informed on you if you hadn't treated me so badly. I saw that you were a gang of murderers as well as illicit distillers. Bob, where is my pistol?"

"Somebody stole it, dunno whar it is."

"Where is the new plant Bob?"

"Over in the next holler, ye go down this canyon till ye come to where tother holler comes in an' turn up thet, and ye'll find the still in a big cave."

"Is there anybody over there Bob?"

"Yes, thars two fellers at work thar."

Winston and myself walked around the point and up to the new plant, arrested the two workers and smashed the works beyond redemption. By the time we returned to the old plant Bob Higgins had died. We demolished the rest of the works, turned the teams loose and joined our friends. We now had the whole gang either dead, crippled or alive, except old Jernagan. Giving me a couple of hours start, Winston agreed to follow down Turtle Fork with the prisoners. I went over the ridge to John Beard's cabin and called Spotty. He came capering through the door and over the yard fence, grabbed me by the arm and tried to drag me toward the bushes saying, "Come on mister, Pop'll kill yer, he will be here any minute."

"No, Spotty, he won't, he is under arrest. So are all the rest. Did you get my pistol?"

"Yer betcha, it's up here in a holler log."

"Alright Spotty go get it, I've got those twenty nickels."

Just then the woman came to the door and said, "What yer doin' nosin' eround yere? Yer hed better be gittin' erway from yere effen yer knows whut's good fer ye."

"I am not afraid of your gang any more Madam, they've done their last murder. They are all under arrest. Your husband was wounded, and Bob Higgins was killed in the fight, you had better notify his wife and neighbors. He is at the old plant. We turned the mules and steers loose."

"Is thet all ye done to us?"

"That's about all just now, but presently we are going to take your precious preacher away from you. Your gang ought to hang for a half dozen murders, but I guess they may get off with penitentiary sentences."

Here she began to hurl the vilest language I ever heard. I turned from the gate to meet Spotty who handed me my pistol, for which I gave him a dollar and some nickels. Thanking him, I said, "Now boy, you grow up a better man than your father. You see what he came to, being bad doesn't pay, Spotty."

"But Mister, he broke in, I wanna go wit' yer, pop's grabbed, and ma's mean, orful mean. Didn't yer hear her cuss? Every time pop goes off, the

parson comes over yere ter pray fer her, don't see as it does no good nuther."

"Good God, boy, hush it up. Stay with her as long as you can stand it and be a good boy. Sometime I may come to see you and bring you some more nickels. Good-bye Spotty."

"Gud bye, Mister."

Once more and for the last time, he stood gazing after me till I was lost to view. I hurried on down Turtle Fork to the little church, arriving at about eleven o'clock, just as old Jernagan was announcing his text. As I walked up the aisle he looked up and saw me. His jaw dropped and his eyes resembled two burnt holes in a sheet. I greeted him with, "Why hello Parson! That hanging didn't take place as per schedule, did it? I think now though, that it will take place pretty soon after, but with you at the lower end of the rope instead of me. Come down out of it, you old murderer and seducer, you have desecrated God's holy altar long enough."

He started meeting me with his hand in under the bosom of his coat, but I quickly placed my gun under his nose, reached in and pulled out a "hog-leg" with all six chambers loaded with 45 calibre cartridges. He began to stutter and sputter, and call upon the brethren to protect him; that he was innocent, that his good friends up home in the mountains, Mr. and Mrs. John Beard, Bob Higgins and Bill Landers would swear to his honesty and integ-

rity. "Wait a minute old Hard Bargain," I said, waving aloft the "hog-leg," "does this look like an emblem of an innocent preacher in a supposed to be peaceable community? Why your friend Bob Higgins is dead, John Beard is shot, and Bill Landers, together with the whole push are marching to this spot under arrest right now. They say that every time John Beard leaves home you've been going to his cabin to pray for his wife. You should perhaps be there praying for her now for she is no doubt still cussing her red head off." Then I turned to the audience and related to them all of my experience with old Jernagan and his gang.

CHAPTER XVI.

Experiences as a Constable.

When officer Winston and his deputies arrived with the prisoners we handcuffed old Jernagan to the others and proceeded on our way to Tuscumbia. We arrived in Sheffield in the morning of the next day. I served under Winston as deputy for two months during which time we cleaned out two other illicit distilleries, further up the mountains, without tragedy or incidents worth relating.

Between these dates, that is July 1888 and 1905, when I accepted the position as City Marshal at Allenscreek, Tennessee, a mining town, I will briefly relate only a few incidents which occurred during this interval, after my services as deputy.

I went over to Florence and took a job as night watchman at the Florence Wagon factory. The little cities of Florence, Sheffield and Tuscumbia, Alabama, were very near each other, not over two miles space between the suburbs of each. In fact, the bridge spanning the Tennessee River almost connects Florence and Sheffield. I had watched here about a month when one night as I was standing before the furnace of the big boiler talking with the fireman, a fellow bareheaded and out of breath

came running to me with a handful of bank bills and begged me to hide him, that some robbers were after him. I shoved him back along between the wall and boiler and threw some coal sacks over him and ran in the direction from whence he had come looking for the robbers. As I came to his store a block away, I saw two men come out and run off toward the river. When they saw that I was after them, they sent a volley of pistol shots at me. I returned the fire and saw the hindmost grab his shoulder as he ran. When I came to the bank of the river they were in a small boat and pulling for the other side. Returning to the boiler room, the fireman met me outside and said, "Say Wilson, let's get that money, that fellow has two or three thousand dollars in that roll."

"Good God man, hyena, or whatever you are, if I understand you aright, you're not talking to me. That man ran in here and trusted us to protect him."

"But it would be so easy to get the money and burn him in the furnace, no one could ever know what became of him, we can—"

"No, we can't nor you can't, see? You are of the worst type of men and you can't stay on these works any longer while I am here, get going. If you are here in the morning I will inform the manager of your hell born proposal."

"Ha, Ha, I've been here the longest, will the boss believe you or me?"

Here the merchant came out of the boiler room and put in, "I heard your dirty proposal, sir, and they will believe me, and don't you doubt it."

The fireman stuck his dirty finger under my nose and hissed, "I'll get even with you and don't you doubt it." Whereupon I knocked him around facing a direction away from the premises and assisted his going with my foot.

I accompanied the merchant to his residence, closing up his store enroute. He thanked me kindly for my honesty and assistance. Next morning when the foreman appeared at the factory, he was pretty raw about there being no steam and asked if I had seen anything of Myrax, the fireman. "Yes, he was here until late last night. I ran him off. He is a bad hombre mister foreman."

"Hell, what have you got to do with chasing my labor away from this plant?" I told him of the incident in detail, but instead of being appeased, he became more hard boiled and begun to curse and abuse me, expressing a doubt of my story. I replied that the merchant would substantiate my statements.

"Damn old Benson, he's a bigger liar than you are."

He was a little dried-up Englishman. I had always tried to avoid taking the initiative in a fight with a smaller man than myself, but sometimes a small man can be so vicious you cannot help reaching for him. It was thus in this case. I reached

for his foretop and jerked him sprawling upon his face, set my knee upon the back of his neck and blistered him with a piece of plank. When I let him up, I turned and saw the head manager approaching. He simply refused to listen to any explanation and fired me off the works. So much for unprincipled types of men.

I went from here back up to the Brickville neighborhood in Lawrence County, Alabama, near where my sweetheart lived with her mother, and worked for a widow woman till I married. My wife and myself lived with my mother-in-law and I farmed her place the ensuing year. Burnet Carter, my wife's cousin, was the Justice of the Peace. He deputized me as constable. My first service as deputy in this capacity is pretty characteristic of my general sentiments. An attachment of foreclosure was placed in my hands, the security being a milch cow belonging to a family over on Town Creek on the Foster plantation. The debt was fifteen dollars, and owed to a prosperous merchant at Jonesboro. When I went after the cow, a little weakly girl answered my call at the gate. I asked for her father and she replied that he was sick in bed, adding "Papa says come in." When I glanced about the living room of the cabin the enthusiasm of my executive efficiency dropped several degrees. On a bed in one corner lay the husband and father, a crutch leaning near. He looked pale and sick. On a bed in another corner lay the wife and mother

apparently sick with malaria. On a straw mattress upon the floor lay three small children, one not over a year old. The little sickly girl and a four-year-old boy were the only two able to be up. The little girl offered me a chair. Then I asked, "What seems to be the matter with you good people here?"

The wife answered, "We have all had malarial fever; husband also has the rheumatism, and don't seem to get well very fast. There is no one here able to do anything except our little girl, and we are in a destitute condition. There are times when we almost starve and freeze. No wood, except what brush the little girl can gather up and bring."

"How long have you been living here?"

"A little more than three months. We haven't scarcely any acquaintances here."

Here one of the little ones upon the "pallet" began to whine for something to eat. In a soothing, quavering voice, the mother said, "There is nothing to eat now darling, maybe Aunt Sue will bring a little bread and milk this evening." Then she explained that Aunt Sue was an old negro woman who helped in the Foster kitchen a mile away, and had promised to bring a little milk and bread from the house that evening, that her cow had a young calf, but had not begun to use the milk yet. The little boy came up to me and with his hands on my knees and looking up at me with his big eyes said,

"Our tow has a little talf, we'll have lots o' milk soon."

I swallowed the lumps out of my throat and came very near sobbing aloud. I arose and bid them good-bye and rode off in a gallop. I stopped at the Foster gate and called him out. Introducing myself, I said, "Mr. Foster, did you know this family down here on your place is in a mighty bad fix?"

"I had heard that some of them were sick. I rented the man the house with the understanding that he was to work for me. He didn't look like a man able to work at the time. I expect I will lose my rent."

"Why, Mr. Foster, you people who are neighbors to that man ought to help him. If a man ever needed help, he does and that right now."

"Well, I am furnishing shelter, that is all I feel disposed to do."

"Mr. Foster have you got any shelled corn that you would sell for cash?"

"I have a sheller and can shell it for you if you want to buy some."

"Well, if I pay you for the corn, will you take it to the mill and deliver the meal to the sick family?"

"Yes, I have to send to the mill tomorrow anyway. I'll do that."

Paying him for three bushels of corn, I galloped away toward Jonesboro. Arriving there, I approached old Graspous, the merchant and handed the writ of attachment to him saying, "Mr. Graspous, that family are all sick and unable to work and they need that cow."

"Hell, it's my cow, and I am going to have her. It's your duty as an officer to bring that cow to me."

"She is not your cow, nor ever will be, and it is not going to be my duty to deprive a starving family of their only hope of sustenance. There is a young calf with the cow now, and they are going to keep her. Get that mortgage, I will pay the debt."

"Hell, the debt is past due, and the cow is worth twice as much as the debt."

"That is what I know, and that is why I say get that mortgage."

"But—er—ah—I'll not do it, the cow is worth more than—"

I choked him off from the finish of the sentence. When he begun to turn blue in the face I let up slightly and he gurgled, "the cow." With my thumb on his goozle I squeezed again for a longer time. When his eyes and tongue begun to protrude, I let up again. This time he gurgled, "the mortgage," and motioned toward his desk at the back. I followed him to the desk; he raised the lid as if to get the mortgage, but instead he brought out an old pistol and was bringing it in line with my stomach

when I knocked him down and kicked the gun out of his hand. He arose wobbling in his knees, searched in the desk and got the mortgage. I paid him, made him write a receipt, and walked out and galloped away. The sick man and his family got well, and paid back my money several months later. Thus ends the third volume of my biography. I could relate several other interesting incidents which took place during my service as deputy, and sojourn in Alabama, but it would be too long a story for the little book that is carrying this story. The fourth and last volume will tell of my removal back home to Tennessee and subsequent service as City Marshal in Allenscreek, a mining town, where I had every sort of character in the world to deal with, and where I had more "hair raising" experiences than any other City Marshal in the United States.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Tamer of Bad Men.

Wilson Cleaning Up Allenscreek.

Moving home to Tennessee from Alabama, I farmed on my grandfather's big plantation for a few years without incident worth relating until I was taken sick with a sort of consumptive catarrh. I then moved to my father's small farm to die. After a year's careful treatment with the most effective remedies, wild-cat brandy and honey mostly, I got better and went into the general mercantile business at Waynesboro. There being no system of merchant's organization there at all, competition was fierce, and but little profit was realized upon anything. Times were close at this time. I was inexperienced in the business and in two years and a half I was a broke man. I made volunteer assignment and walked out of my store without anything. My wife had two hundred dollars that we never had put into the business, this was all.

It was perhaps ten days after my failure that I received a letter from Mr. Bragg, the Mayor of Allenscreek and Superintendent of the Buffalo Iron Works, asking me to come and take the position as City Marshal at that place. This mining and

smelting town is fifteen miles east of Waynesboro, and reputed to be a tough place. They used more than a thousand laborers, and every sort of character on earth gathered here. They had never been able to get a marshal that could hold the job at all or stay two months. Anytime a marshal would start to put the "cabosh" upon the deviltry of the bad element they would take his "billy" away from him and run him off the works. Somehow Mayor Bragg got the idea (from reputation I suppose), that I could hold down that job, hence the letter. Well, this was no enviable position and I really did not want it, but it was too late in the year to rent farm lands and I had no choice but to take the job. So just two weeks before Christmas I was on sworn duty as City Marshal of Allenscreek, Tennessee. That day several of the worst characters came into town to "view" me like I was a strange kind of trapped wampus cat. Among the worst of those were Cal Brewer, three Pollard boys, who ran with Brewer, and Bill Staggs, who lived in Peery Hollow, a part of the mines, yet in the corporation. Brewer and the Pollards lived several miles from the town; nobody knew what they did for a living, except that they were thought to bootleg whiskey and gamble with the miners and furnace hands. They had a habit of coming into Allenscreek and doing about as they pleased, and their idea of sport was pretty much like that of drunken savages. In the evening of that first day I noticed Cal Brewer, the Pollards, Bill Staggs, Jim Frazier and others

of the worst element bunched together along the depot platform. They would jerk their thumbs toward me and laugh and slap their hands. I knew they were discussing and making sport of me among themselves. They were all sitting in a row with their feet hanging off the platform. I turned and beginning with the first I stopped in front of the last one of them and stared into his face with my jaws shot out like hames for a full minute to the man, without saying a word. Then sweeping the bunch collectively with a look of warning, I gave my head a jerk and walked on. Not a word was said by them or me. Walking some distance I glanced back and saw Brewer and Staggs standing down in front of the others gesticulating and frowning. It seemed as though their humor had changed considerably. Presently Mayor Bragg overtook me coming from the depot. Keeping step with me he said, "Say Jim, do you know the sort of bunch you are up against here?"

"Why I think I do Mr. Bragg, I just had an eye fight with some of them back there just now, and I think they got offended."

"Eye fight, hell, Jim, you will have fist fights, stick fights, rock fights, and gun fights with that gang before you're through. They are tough and don't you doubt it. You be careful Wilson, you should carry a pet owl under your arm to watch your back." Here, with a laugh, he walked into his office.

After getting an eye full and a grudge, the gang broke up and went home. The town of Allenscreek had several localities named as follows: Hilltop, where the best white people resided; Lick Skillet, where the lower element of whites lived; Whiterow, where the best class of negroes lived; and Goose Bottom, where the low class of negroes fussed, fought, and hid. Then there was a Peery Hollow, where a general mixture of all kinds of people lived. This was about a mile over a ridge from town. This was where Mr. Bill Staggs and his gang reigned with terror. In a conference with the city council, they promised that if I would clean up the town of gambling, drunken carousing, and lewdness, they would stand by me and let me do it in my own way. They informed me that there were several paracites and vagabond hanger-ons hanging around town that were never known to work and outwardly showed no means of making a living, and who were suspected of being crooked gamblers. They gave me some names and descriptions. Next day I went the rounds looking for this gentry. As I found them, I told them that they would either have to go to work or leave town. Some took the proclamation with snarls and curses and some took it for granted. But when I came to the ring leader a big bully named Buck Jones, he jumped off the edge of the depot platform saying, "The hell I have to leave this town, who says I do?"

"I say you have to leave this town or go to work, and I mean it. If you fellows are hanging around

here doing nothing tomorrow after the train leaves, I will slam you so far back in the calaboose your eyes will shine like a racoon's in a hollow log."

"Well I'll be right here."

"You had better be at work if you are."

The next evening at 2:30 o'clock I walked through the train before it started to see if any of my vags were aboard. There were several, but several had defied me and were staying, among them the bully Buck Jones. Then I went about collecting my stubborn vags that had refused to go (after the train had left) and concluded to start in with Buckie whom I saw sitting upon some baggage by the wall of the depot among the usual loungers who gathered to watch the train leave. Allenscreek was the terminus of the Centerville Branch of the N. & C. System. I walked up to Jones and said, "Well, you didn't leave, nor go to work either didja Buckie?"

"No, by God, I am not going anywhere at your dictation, and I will work when I please and play when I please."

"Here, you come with me and shut up your foul mouthing, come!" I took him by the sleeve and started with him toward the calaboose, but he jerked loose and struck me a glancing blow upon the side of the head with a brass knuckle which he had on under a glove. He staggered me, but I straightened up instantly and brought him above the ear with my billie. He dropped like an ox. Quickly

I looked around the crowd and found five other vags whom I ordered to carry Jones to the calaboose. As they laid Jones upon a bunk in a corner of the lock-up, I quickly slammed the door to after me and locked it. I walked back to the main street leaving such a snarling and cursing behind as you never heard. I saw, over by a negro snack-stand, a bunch of my vagabond negroes. They were talking excitedly; one said, "Dat police is gwine turn ober uh new leaf round yuh. Dis gamblin' eber night an' foolin' round in de day time am gonna quit right chuh, fo-f-wiff." Another replied, "De Debil yo' say? I would like tuh see dat ole police walk me off tuh dat stinkin' calaboose like he did dem white fokes." "Dat's me, dat's me," said several others. "He'll sho' do it," said the first, "case I seed de debbil flashin' outen dat mahshalls's eyes when he was talkin' to dat Jones."

I suddenly whirled upon them and said, "Come with me." The negro that had put up the talk of defiance jerked an owl-head gun out of his hip pocket and started it to a level with my breast when his arm was smashed above the wrist by a bullet from my pistol. His owl-head dropped to the ground and his hands went up with a bellow, "Ah's quit boss, ah's quit." Another buck ran off, but I sent a bullet into the calf of his leg, and he came limping back with his hands up. I marched the five bucks to the calaboose and locked them in the negro end of the building. I then went for the doctor, who dressed the wounds of the prisoners. I telephoned

the sheriff to come over next morning after Buck Jones and the negro who had the owl-head pistol. I had also taken a pistol from Jones as well as the brass knuckles. The others were tried before the mayor next morning and punished according to their several implications. This about wound up the vagrancy and open loafing at Allenscreek.

I next went after the drinking and carousing on the streets. On Saturday when the train came in I took a stand outside the express room door where I could warn every person who received liquor that he could not drink it on the street or in any public place, and that he could not curse and yell at all in the limits of the corporation after he had drunk it. Some took the warning good naturedly, and others scowled viciously. But before night they found that I meant business. That afternoon there were a number of drunks. Some went home and to bed as I told them to do. One fellow named Ferber came staggering along the sidewalk. I told him that he would have to go in. He told me to go to hell, and yelled as loud as he could. I started toward him and he snatched out his knife and made at me cutting the space between us back and forth and cursing as he came. I knocked the knife thirty feet away with my stick, and broke his hand badly. After locking him up I went back and got three more drunks off the street. Then the other carousers begun to make themselves scarce. Late that evening I made the rounds of the whole corpo-

ration determined to set an example of discipline as far as drinking and carousing was concerned. Passing through "Lick Skillet," I saw a drunk struggling in the grip of three of his friends in his yard. As I drew near he yelled, "Damn him, mebbe he wants me, let him start to get me."

I interrupted, "I will certainly come and get you if you go to raising a rumpus. If you don't believe it, try it and let me hear of it." His friends dragged him into the house, and I went on over to Peery Hollow. Over there I found three drunks. Two were in their yards yelling, singing and laughing but doing no other harm. I went in and asked them kindly to be quiet and not disturb their neighbors. One replied good naturedly, "Thunder, Cap, doncher know yer can't disturb these folks over here. They are usen to it."

A little further up the hollow I found Bill Staggs in a drunken condition and raising Cain. He was out in the road in front of a neighbor's house half nude, and daring the neighbors out of the house. Just as he threw a rock through the fellow's window I laid my hand on his shoulder and jerked him around facing me. When he saw who I was he snarled and thrust his hand into his pocket after his gun. I caught his wrist and twisted the gun away from him and shoved him into the road before me. As I passed his gate with him his wife came out saying, "Oh, officer, please don't get him into trouble, we need his wages so bad."

"He has got himself into trouble, Mrs. Staggs. I didn't do it. Here put this away and say nothing about it." As I said this I tossed the pistol over into the yard and shoved Staggs on up the hill towards town. The woman was a sweet, pretty little woman and perhaps appreciated the fact that I was saving her brutal husband a concealed pistol bill and jail sentence. Staggs did not appreciate it. He cursed, snarled, threatened and fought me all the way to the lock-up. Refraining from beating him with my stick I slapped his face a dozen times for his abuse and efforts to fight me. Staggs was a deadly enemy to me from that time on. That Saturday night, I heard the following conversation through a window of a pool hall.

"That new marshal sure has started in right, by golly he has got that calaboose plumb full of drunks. He went over to Peery Hollow and brought in Bill Staggs. I guess Bill is through doing just as he pleases around this town now."

"Yes, some of these toughs will get hurt if they fool with him. I have heard that he's been in dozens of bad fights. One in particular where he fought seven men with pistols down here in Perry County at New Era, several years ago."

"Ah, is this the fellow that fought that bad gang at New Era?"

"Yes, and he was a very young man then, they say he is the best, quickest pistol shot east of the Mississippi River."



THE LOCK-UP.

"But he nearly missed them negroes the other day."

"Shucks, he hit them right where he aimed to hit them."

"Well, he treats a drunk fair. He sends them home to bed if they will go; if they won't he locks them up."

The round-up paid their fines the next morning and went to their respective homes soberer and wiser men. Before his departure, I took Staggs to one side and tried to reason kindly with him, but the fellow was surly and resentful and swore he would get me foul sometime if he lived. Anyhow this about broke up the wholesale drunkenness. But of course from time to time I made arrests for drunkenness in a few single cases.

The next and last bad spell of drunkenness was during Christmas. That was a busy day for me. There was a drunken riot among the negroes in Goose Bottom. A negro boy ran up to me and said as he rolled the white of his eyes outward, "Cap, you bettah run down yondah, dey sho' is killin' each uddah down dah." I ran to the place and found eight or ten men and women all mixed up in the worst fracas I ever saw. They used knives, rocks, poles, razors, chairs, fists, teeth and toe nails. I ran in with my stick in one hand and my pistol in the other shouting "stop it." I shoved the "busiest" of them apart as I mixed in, cracking some heads as I went. They fought all over me, but I finally

got the riot stopped, such another beat-up cut-up lot, I never saw. One big black actually had his lip bitten off to the lower point of his chin, the most hideous sight I ever saw. I put the bunch in the road and started them to the Mayor's office. A big buckess with a bloody razor in her hand refused to go, "Get in line, there you," I said.

"Ah's not gwine, dat ah aint." I started at her and she made at me cutting and waving the razor. I long armed over and tapped her black waving wig. The black wavy wig fell off and revealed a crinkled cranium that resembled a small melon, little end up. The negress bawled, "Ouch, quit, boss, ah goes."

One negro carried a pole fifteen feet long. He said, "Ah shows de white fokes what dat niggah beat me wid." For this riot nine bucks and buckesses paid fines. In the afternoon a tough guy named Jim Frazier, came in on a spree. He ran his horse up and down the street yelling, and finally tried to ride into a restaurant. Here is where I got him. I pulled him off the horse and he came off fighting. He was a bad scrapper but he was partly drunk and no match for me. As he saw I was getting the best of him he tried to get his pistol. Then I cracked his cranium, and took the pistol away from him. On our way to the Mayor's office he begun to whimper and beg, "For God's sake officer don't let me in for a pistol bill and jail sentence. It will ruin me. If you will let me go, I will slide outa here never to bother you again."

"Ought to think these thoughts as you come in on a rampage like this, Frazier. No set of durn bullies can come here and take this town with me in it, see?"

"I know that now officer, and should have known it before, knowing what I do about you. But not thinking, I just came in as we used to from habit. I have no money with which to pay a fine."

"No, Frazier, you think you're bad. You intended to bully me. Now take this old rusty snapper and put it away, and don't you ever bring it back here cutting up with it. If you do I will consider it a personal affront, and I will lay this star off and bust you wide open." In the Mayor's office I interceded, "Mr. Bragg, this man started to raise Cain, but apparently repented and says he has no money to pay a fine. Shall we give him a chance to retrench or lock him up?"

He looked at Frazier for a minute, then jerking his thumb toward the door said, "Get out of town, and watch your step, if you come back."

So this was another time I tempered justice with mercy, and it was not appreciated. That crack I had to give him outweighed his gratitude. That night the negroes held a big jubilee or festival at their "hall" back on the ridge. I got my young friend, Clarence Johnson, a book-keeper, to accompany me that night. Arriving at the hall about 10 o'clock we found a great rabble going on in and out of the hall. I went in to stop the rabble in the hall first,

leaving Clarence outside. A couple was engaged in an obscene dance, with another negro menacing them with a razor. I knocked the razor from the negro's hand and shoved the couple apart, and told them to stop it. The negro behind the crude counter was drunk. I saw him deliberately smash a negress in the face with a soft hot pie. I reached over and lightly tapped him on the bean as I said, "Here, if you don't stop this rabble in here, I will put the whole bunch out and close it up."

"Dis is our hill, an' our hall, an' we gwine do as we please up yuh. De yuthuh police nebber butted in up yuh."

"Never mind, you can do as you please as long as your doings don't conflict with the ordinance. When they do, I will butt in, see?"

Another negro said, "I bet dat police gits killed fo' three months."

"There will be a lot of dead bucks in evidence when I pass out," I retorted.

Just here, there were a number of shots fired outside. I ran out in time to see some negroes running toward the bushes. Johnson said that he heard them plot to do the shooting to draw me out of the hall, and after them, while two others were to shoot me from ambush. We went off down the hill as if to leave, but returned and hid among the bushes near the corner of the hall. Presently the four bucks came out of the bushes and joined the crowd. John-

son recognizing them, we stepped up and covered them and ordered them to go before us to the lock-up. One ran off and was shot in the hip and brought limping back. Another went for a gun and got his hand shattered. The gang of four was locked up, and after their wounds were dressed my day's work was done and Christmas was over.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Victory for Decency.

The next vice I went after was lewdness and prostitution. This vice I never could tolerate even as a citizen, much less as an officer of the law. No women of this profession lived within the corporation limits, but down the creek just over the corporation line there was a cluster of cottages, owned by one John Lacy, who rented the cottages to prostitutes. This man Lacy had a pretty daughter too and I wondered why he would house such vice. A grasping desire for high rent, I concluded. I made several arrests, the circumstances of which are not fit to print. Then I took to slipping over the line and watching the going on at the cottages late of nights. I had already asked Lacy to move the lewd element away from his premises. He cursed and abused me for meddling where I had no business.

"But Mr. Lacy," I reasoned, "you have a nice daughter, and others here have daughters and for the sake of good morals, gentle manners, and society can't you do that much?"

"Hell no, they don't bother me; get out and leave me an' my business alone."

Well, I went. One of the Pollard boys had been going in company with Jennie Lacy. Each Satur-

day and Sunday I had noticed him drive her in his buggy along the road past those questionable residences. I happened to be standing near the corporation line looking down the road along by the cottages and saw Pollard driving toward me with Jennie beside him in the buggy. He lazily pulled aside up to one of the gates and stopped. The girl playfully snatched the lines and drove the horse on. As they came on I stepped behind a large oak tree near by as they passed. I heard the girl ask, "Who lives in the cottage where you wanted to stop?"

"Oh, them? Two young ladies live there. They have a fine piano, and they play and dance there some nights. We will stop in with them awhile some night, will you?"

"Oh, maybe so, sometime," was her answer in her innocent sweet voice.

This incident was the thing that set me to watching out of my jurisdiction. The very next Sunday night I was hidden near that same cottage when Lem Pollard drove up to the gate, hitched his horse to the fence and assisted the girl to the ground. Slipping around the corner of the house, I met them between gate and front steps. I shoved Pollard aside and laid my hand upon the girl's arm saying, "Little lady, that's a house of prostitution, and you're not going in. You'd better come home with me."

"Oh Lem," she said in horrified tones, "you would?"

Pollard strode after us and hissed, "You meddling devil of hell, you're no officer out here."

"No, Pollard, don't consider me an officer out here. Just consider me a man and start something." He sprang at me, and I met him in the face with my fist. He dropped to his knees but came again. We had a hard tussle all over the yard. He was a hard scrapper, but so was I in those days. My hardened experience as a scrapper nearly always won out for me. And so it was in this instance. Leaving Pollard stunned and out of breath upon the ground, I led Jennie Lacy out to the road and home. I called Lacy out to the gate. He came sleepily rubbing his eyes and said, "Hey, what's this? What are you doing with Jennie?"

"Ask her, you old careless scoundrel; tell him Jennie!"

"Oh, Daddy, he's right, Lem Pollard tried to trick me into, oh, I can't say it; Mr. Jim, you tell him."

"Pollard started into one of your cottages down here with your daughter. He misrepresented the inmates to her, do you understand? And say Lacy, from now on every time I meet you, I am going to lay aside this star and beat you up till you move those women out, and I will do the same thing to any others who attempt to shelter them in this vicinity."

With that I started on, but the girl tripped after me and whispered, "I do thank you so much Mr. Wilson. Daddy will move them, I will see to that."

"That's the right spirit little girl, and say, are you convinced that Pollard is bad company?"

"You bet I am, he's through."

Two days later wagon loads of dunnage, pianos, sofas, rugs, and other household stuff was dumped upon the depot platform. At train time a dozen painted creatures with that peculiar hard look acquired by excessive debauchery appeared at the ticket window. One of them scowled and then made a "face" at me. With a smile I said, "Why Sal, I believe it does improve your looks, you should try to get that pose permanently fixed." She spat at me and turned her back.

After the train pulled out, old Lacy gathered me by the arm and carried me aside. "Wilson, you are the cleanest man I ever knew. You saved my little daughter, not only from disgrace, but from a designing wretch as contemptible as the devil himself, and you have made a different man out of me. I would hunt Pollard and kill him, but Jennie says what you done to him is a plenty. Now when you need a friend—call on me. I am with you."

CHAPTER XIX.

Detective Work.

So except in a few transient cases this ended that vice in Allenscreek. The next incident worth noting was my first run in with Cal Brewer and his gang, the Pollards, which took place on Saturday following the Sunday night I beat up Lem Pollard. I knew full well that that would precipitate the seething storm of envy the gang owed me for my being their superior in anything they could mention, except cursedness. They went straight to the express office for their package of liquor and thence to the livery stable where they tanked up. I was leaning back with my elbows on a counter of a grocery store when they came in on me. Brewer swaggered up and yelled in my face, "Hello police!"

"Hello back," I replied.

"Back Hell, by God, I don't back. Ain't yer never heard o' me? My name's Cal Brewer."

"Well, have a seat Mr. Brewer."

"An' I got a bad rep, I have."

"Well, have two seats, Mr. Brewer."

"I see ye ain't never heard o' me an' don't know who ye are makin' fun of."

"Oh, I've heard of some ruffian back there in the brush, but I don't care a hang about you, only you stop swearing here in public."

By this time a large crowd had gathered to watch the outcome of the long expected fracas. As my last words left my lips Brewer suddenly gave me a shove which overbalanced me so far that I came very near sitting down into a chair by the counter sure enough. With the shove he said, "You take er seat."

I recovered my balance and landed him a blow in the face with my left fist which knocked him staggering to his knees over by the other counter. I saw that he was going after his gun and sure enough he came to his feet with it half out of his pocket. I caught it by the barrel and rapped his knuckles with my club. He let go and I threw it behind the counter. He was fighting all the time like a mechanical flail. One of the Pollards pitched him an open knife. He made one pass at me with it and I knocked him senseless. Then the Pollards begun to curse and said that I had taken advantage of Brewer. I told them that they were forty sorts of liars and to get out of town while they were all in one piece. At this they all started to draw their guns and each of them got shot as fast as I was capable of shooting. Two of the Pollards got a shot at me before they fell or sat down. One shot grazed my shoulder, and the other cut through my coat at my waist band. This ended the fight and

I collected their guns, got help and carried them to the calaboose, where the doctor dressed their wounds and revived Brewer back to consciousness. Next day the sheriff came over and placed the gang under bond for carrying concealed weapons, and attacking an officer while doing his duty. This apparently settled that gang for a while. The wounds of two of the Pollards were pretty severe. No matter how good a shot you are, you can't just play with a gang and them shooting to kill.

"Well Jim," said the Mayor a few days after the scrimmage with Brewer and his gang, "holding your own, I perceive."

"I believe so, Mr. Bragg. In fact, I believe I have gained on this cussedness around this town a little at least, what do you think about it?"

"I think you've accomplished already what no other man in ten states could have done. That's what I think. By the way what vice are you going to tackle next?"

"I think I will go after gambling next, Mr. Bragg. The negroes especially are making themselves ridiculous and the town a sham. They will drop down in a ring anywhere in town and shoot craps. When they see me coming they of course hide the money and dice, and lie like Mexicans about what they were doing."

"Well, go after them in public places, but I don't believe I would bother with the negroes if they take their games to the bushes. Now white men are dif-

ferent. They play cards, and usually for high stakes and there are always drifting sharps who take hard earned money away from families who need it. I would go after them anywhere I could find them."

Negroes watching for my approach were difficult to catch in the act. In a few instances, I suddenly appeared from around corners, box cars, or door jambs and made a number of arrests, but they soon got so leery of my tactics each bunch would keep a lookout man standing nearby. Under that system they got by for a couple of weeks without being molested to much extent. During this interval, I sent to Nashville and got a negro make-up or disguise. This was composed of black rubber all set with crinkled short hair upon the scalp, the lips were of the (negro) regulation thickness and came to a feather edge just within the mouth. You pulled this over your head and fitted the eye lids and lips and you could not be distinguished from a negro at all if your eyes were black. Even if your eyes were blue the disguise worked perfectly at night.

So one night with suitable attire to match the head make-up I went forth to fill up the calaboose. The first crowd I came upon were in a "weaving" way between two lines of box cars. I walked up and "faded" a buck who had said, two bits he win, but he didn't win and I made a quarter in tobacco money. After the dice had gone around the circle I stepped back and pointed two good pistols at the gang and said, "Put up your hands and rise up. Now turn your backs and march to the calaboose.

The first one that starts to run knows what he will get, that's that and let's go!" I locked up just seventeen that trip; not a man dared to try to run off, but as a precaution I went and got my friend Clarence Johnson to follow me at a distance and be ready to help guard them to the lock-up, because the door would have to be opened this time to admit the prisoners, while before the door was already open. I found the next bunch at the furnaces in an empty ore bin. The negro on watch at the mouth of the bin merely gave me an uninterested glance and turned his eyes on the game. I stood beside him and watched for ten minutes. Then I stepped back and ordered "the watchman" inside at the point of two guns, and then ordered all hands up, with my eyes steadily upon them I signaled to Johnson. There were twenty-three in this bunch. On the march this time one of the prisoners bolted. He got shot in the hip and promptly limped back into the fold. Well, this was forty. We found our next big bunch in the negro hall on the ridge. Two or three got away, but we saved thirty-five.

Down in Goose Bottom under a trestle we got nineteen. The last lot of twelve we took out of an old unused coke oven. This amounted to one hundred and six. "Good Lord, Jim," said Johnson, "that beats anything I ever saw. A whole regiment of gamblers. Won't they smother in there?"

"Well I hardly think so, it is cool tonight. Both ends are full but they seem to have standing room,

besides it is now one o'clock. We will take them out early and let them go to their 'Breffus' with a strong appetite though with a bad memory."

Next morning I got several armed guards and marched the one hundred and six to the Mayor's office. He assessed them with a very small fine and costs. Then said to them, "Now I have every one of your names here on this docket, and when I write your names here again it will cost you something sure enough. You can quit public gambling or leave town. You may take your crap shooting to the woods, but if you get caught, look out!"

After that I started on the trail of white gambling. By padding the rubber face and changing my clothes and hat, I managed to look like a different negro entirely. In this guise I managed to see and overhear enough to put me close to identities of certain characters and gambling rendezvous. By quietly slipping about at night and on Sundays I located three rendezvous. One I discovered up a draw or hollow under a bluff where there was a water fall; another I found over in Peery Hollow in an old barn, and the other one in an old mine shaft. On Sunday after I had made these discoveries I took my friend Johnson and made the big round-up. We had no trouble getting the gang at the mine shaft. There were nine of those. After locking them in, we went to the falls. This place was hemmed in on three sides, a bluff at the back and steep banks on either side. We had no trouble in

holding the gang up, but two of them balked about getting to their feet and coming along. One fellow named McClain refused to notice my order to get up. After telling him the third time to get up he still sullenly sat there saying, "Ah hell, I am not going to lay in that stinking lock-up till tomorrow."

"Coming up?" I hissed as I took aim at his heel.

"No, by God, shoot."

Pop, and off went his shoe heel. He still sat. I took aim exactly at the line between the ground and the caboose of his pants, saying, "Coming up?"

"No, by—"

Pop, and this time up he came, whirling round and round holding his hands over a long slit in his pants slightly colored with blood and yelling, "He's shot my liver out."

I turned to the others saying, "Coming up?" They sullenly arose to their feet with their hands up. "Ah," I said, "don't want any liver pills, eh?" There were sixteen of those.

We went along a point of hill that led right down to the back of the old barn in Peery Hollow. Bushes shielded us to within thirty feet of the back wall. The front of the barn faced out toward the public road which was sixty yards away. From the bushes we saw a sentinel leaning against the corner of the old building watching the road. The man's back was turned to us. We slipped close to the wall and peeped through a crack at the play-

ers. There were twenty-one men inside all busy with cards or dice. We noticed two of the Pollards and Bill Staggs among them. This meant trouble unless we got them dead to rights from the drop. After a whispered conversation with Johnson, we crept along a side wall till I could lay my hand upon the sentinel. Then I hissed, "Don't open your mouth. If you do I will blow your head off." The fellow threw his hands above his head. His jaw dropped open but no sound issued from his mouth. Whispering to Johnson to bring him in just behind me I sprang around into the doorway with two guns covering the crowd. Instantly Johnson shoved the sentinel in past me and also covered the gang with his two guns. I ordered all hands up. All complied but Bill Staggs and the Pollards. I said, "Bill, you and the Pollards put up your hands." They stood with every muscle tensed and a look of defiance upon their faces. "Keep your hands up and stand out of line, fellows, there is going to be a gun fight."

At this, one of the Pollards put up his hands, but the other one and Staggs went for their guns. I blazed away at their coat pockets while their hands were still in their pockets. The other Pollard then stuck up his hand gushing with blood. Bill Staggs got his gun out and fired hitting me through the flesh of my side, but instantly he received two bullets one in his pistol arm and the other in the shoulder pretty close to the danger line. He fell, and I sat down for a minute still covering the crowd

with my guns. I had instructed Johnson not to get in the fight if there should be one unless he had to. After I had overcome my faintness I reloaded my almost empty pistol and called in some men who had come up and asked them to take Staggs to his house not far away, and go for the doctor. Johnson and I then marched the prisoners over the ridge to the calaboose. On the way we met Doctor Sladen and he dressed Pollard's wounded hand. He wanted to dress my wound, but I told him to run on to Bill Staggs, and fix me up when he came back. Well, we now had forty-nine white gamblers in the lock-up, and it was about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, too long to keep that many men huddled up in a lock-up, so I sent Johnson after Mayor Bragg and his docket, while I lay upon the grass nearby and rested.

Soon the Mayor came and arranged their fines. Some paid off and others were put under some sort of security for their fines, and all turned loose. Now maybe you think the bad element of Allenscreek wasn't seething with rage and hatred of me. But believe me they were. But this practically wound up the gambling within the corporation limits. As McClain walked off, Johnson, the Mayor and some others just roared with laughter at that slit in the caboose of his breeches. To make the thing more laughable he scowled, put both hands over the slit and shambled on.

At my residence the doctor dressed my wound. I was down with it for ten days. Young Johnson

served in my stead as marshal. When I was able to go on duty again, it became apparent to me that there must be some source from which liquor could be had within the corporation limits. I tried to trail both negroes and white men to the Blind Tiger but without success. Then one night I made up in my negro disguise and set forth to succeed. Up toward the old spent mines I met an old drunk negro. I hailed him with, "Hello African, ah wants to find mahseff some whiskey, ah gives yo' fo' bits fo' uh drink."

"Aw, go long niggah, ah ain't got no boose."

"Ah gives yo' six bits effen yo' go's an' shows me whuh ah can git mahseff dat whiskey?"

"Does yo' know how tuh keep yo' mouf shet?"

"Ah don't know nuthin' else but, les ramble." He turned around and staggered back up the hill, saying, "Alright ah go's wid yo', but effen yo' gives dis thing uhway ah brakes de back of yo' neck wid uh brick."

He led me away up into the head of a hollow to where an old ore pit had been dug, down to where an underground cave had been struck. The old negro went down into the pit and motioned me to follow. We went through the mouth of the cave. Making a sudden turn to the right I saw a room full of white men and negro men, all drinking, cursing, laughing and talking. There was a crude bar, and the man in attendance looked somehow familiar to me. I called for a whiskey and drank

one while I studied the face of the dispenser. At last I recognized the man as a murderous hearted fellow named Myrax, whom I had kept from murdering an innocent man in Florence, Alabama, years before. I managed to dispose of several other drinks without actually drinking them, seemingly getting drunker all the time. Finally I collapsed over against the wall in a corner.

Late in the night after all had gone except the wild-catter and a negro attendant, the man Myrax said, "Luke, get that negro up and out of here, and let's close up." The negro shambled over and shook me saying, "Hueh git up and outen dis, us gwine close up." I staggered to my feet and around the room a time or two and mumbled, "How does ah git outa heuh?"

"Take him out, up to the path and start him off," said Myrax. I staggered after the negro to the top rim of the outer pit and then knocked him senseless with the butt of my pistol. Quickly I handcuffed his arms around a sapling and ran back for Myrax. When I slipped in upon him he had his back to me filling some bottles from a keg. Just then the negro outside raised a squall, but when Myrax looked wildly around my gun was looking him straight in the eye. "Put 'em up Myrax, there, that's right. Remember that poor fellow at Florence that you wanted to rob and burn up in the furnace of the boiler? Well, this isn't him. I am him who kept you from it, so you know enough not

to take chances with me. Lie down there upon your stomach. That's it. Just so." With my knees upon the small of his back I securely tied his hands together with his necktie. He was snarling, mouthing and cursing all the time, and the negro kept up a howl outside. But Myrax cursed his luck, not me, for he knew I was aching for an excuse to maul him. I jerked him to his feet and pushed him out into the pit and up to where the negro was handcuffed. I soon had the two handcuffed together and on their way to the calaboose with my pistol prodding them in the small of the back.

Next day the sheriff came over and carried the two with their wet goods to the Wayne County jail. After this I think liquor drinkers warned bootleggers that they had better keep out of Allenscreek with their traffic.

I will now briefly relate my run-in with a town pet, which led up almost to mob violence. The pet was a negro driver and a privileged character. He would get drunk and yell and sing at the top of his voice, and the men about town would laugh at him. I warned him to cut out the drunkenness and yelling several times, sing if you want to, but yell not, I said. I was passing the depot one afternoon and heard him yelling in the negro waiting room. I went in and ordered him to stop it. The depot agent and several others were laughing at him and encouraging him to go his limit. I turned to those and blessed them out for allowing such in and

around the depot. I saw one of the young scamps wink at the negro. I promptly slapped his face and hustled the negro out and kicked him off the platform. Then I turned to the white scamps and just said three words, "Watch your step," and walked off. One afternoon a few days later the negro (old John Woods was his name) came in out of the mines yelling as loud as he could squall. I followed him to the Buffalo Iron Company stable and helped him unharness his team as unconcernedly as I could, to be as mad as I was, then I laid hold of his arm and started with him. "What's yo' gwine do wid me?"

"I am going to put you up just like we did the mules John. I told you about eating them green apples didn't I?"

He snatched loose and brought out a long bladed button jawed knife and made a swipe at me with it. I brought him a slam above the left ear with my club and he fell like an ox. I thought I had killed him. Negroes came on the run from every direction, also the depot crowd. One negro bully elbowed his way in and said, "Dat police has kilt dat man fo' nuthin', dat's what he's done."

I said to him, "Turn that negro over."

He replied, "I ain't gwine do nuthin'."

"Turn that negro over," I hissed as I punched him in the face with my gun. "Turn him over I say."

Then the negro stooped and turned old John over revealing the open knife lying upon the ground. Now said I, "Does that look like I hit him for nothing?" Just then old John sat up. I turned to the crowd and said in a low, tense voice, "You damned bad eggs may look out from now on. Your damned white petters and associates included." (Here I stared the depot crowd right in the eye, I was good and mad.) "When I hit you will not get up as quick as old John has. And when I shoot it will be serious. Get up John and come with me." I helped him to his feet and carried him to the Mayor's office where he paid a fine and went home. The negroes and low whites were pretty sullen for the next few days. One day I noticed two negroes go into the stable office, which was kept by a negro, with shot guns. They came out without the guns and went into the depot. From that on I kept close watch upon the stable day and night. I never saw so many old guns go into a place in all my life. When they were apparently through stocking their "arsenal" I went in and took it over. While I surveyed the fire works old Wash Sanders, the stable keeper, came in from the stable and asked, "What yo' lookin' foh?"

"I am looking for these guns. What are you doing with all these guns in here?"

"Dat's owah business."

I went to the office and got Johnson. Then we purloined a cart and drove to the stable. When we

begun to load the guns onto the cart old Wash begun to curse and abuse me. I broke an old shot gun over his head and wore him out with the barrel. After we had all the guns, ninety-five in all, I turned down the mattress of his old nasty bed and found a hamper basket full of old pistols of all makes and fashions on earth, eighty odd of the pistols. We carried them to the Mayor's office and locked them in an inner room. I told the Mayor of the whole circumstances, and added that I believed the depot crowd partly to blame for the preparation to mob me. He merely nodded and said, "We will see about that." In a few days the depot bunch were withdrawn by the N. & C. Company and some nice men were put into their place. Old John Woods left, and there were no more seditious demonstrations.

My next trouble was over the dog ordinance. I had shot two or three mad dogs passing through Allenscreek. The council met and passed an ordinance compelling all owners of dogs to keep them in their yard or tied and I was instructed to shoot all dogs running loose. I will bet there was a thousand dogs in and around Allenscreek. I went myself and sent others with notices to every residence to keep their dogs confined for thirty days. The law was to take effect on a certain day. On the day after that I went the rounds to see if the people were complying with the law. I found some dogs running loose and shot them. On that day a white child was bitten by a stray dog, and was sent

to Nashville for treatment. Nevertheless, a howl was raised about my shooting of the dogs and resentment spread to the four corners of the corporation. The day after the child was bitten, I again went the rounds. Down in Goose Bottom I peered through the bushes at a place where there were five old hounds. The negro was sitting on his front veranda and hissing the dogs out of the yard and he was nursing a shot gun. I knew that this black scoundrel was laying for me. The dogs were outside of the yard scenting around in the edge of the bushes. I quietly raised my rifle and took dead aim at the stock of his shot gun, and bursted it into splinters. He jumped up and ran inside. I then pumped lead into the dogs as fast as I could. One of them jumped over into the yard and got away. Three were dead and one wounded and howling when the negro came out shooting into the bushes with a pistol. I took steady aim at the bottom of his feet and knocked his trotters from under him. When the smoke cleared away he was sitting upon the floor holding his foot. I finished the wounded dog and straddled over the fence to the negro and saw that I had shot away a small portion of his heel. I picked up his old pistol and ordered him to come with me.

“Whut’s yuh gwine do wid me now, yo’s done kilt me an’ mah dawgs?”

“I am going to jail you for shooting at an officer while doing his duty.”

"Aw now white fokes ain't yuh done uhnough to me?"

"Oh, well, maybe I have, but you keep that other dog in, see?"

I secretly thought that perhaps I had done enough to the black rascal. There was a fellow who lived up above the furnaces whose dogs I had been told were still running loose. I had heard also that he had made his boasts that he would never confine his dogs. I went to the furnace where he was at work and said to him, "Say, Fletcher, you keep those dogs in or I will kill them for you, see?"

"Yes, I see, and I will kill you when you do it too, do you see? I am not going to tie my dogs up for the gnats and flies to eat up."

"I am going to look for your dogs tomorrow, Fletcher." With that I walked away. Next day I hid near Fletcher's house in a plum thicket and watched his dogs. I guess the dogs scented or saw me. They came charging over the fence and into the thicket at me. I shot two and one ran back into the yard. That afternoon Fletcher came hunting me. A friend came running into the store where I was and said, "Jim, Fletcher is coming after you yonder with a gun." I stepped behind the counter and picked up a shot gun loaded with turkey shot and walked out meeting him. As he threw his gun to his shoulder I sprang aside and fired as he did. He fell upon his face, but turned over upon his stomach and fired again, but missed me entirely.

He then dropped his head upon his arm. I did not fire again, which I believe nearly any other man on earth would have done. Two of his shots had struck my forearm. Fletcher was found to be badly wounded. Had my gun been loaded with buckshot he would have been killed. A surgeon was brought from Nashville to attend him. My wound this time did not prevent me from duty. Next day Bill Staggs came over to town with his gun across his shoulder and two dogs at his heels. When I saw him I went to my house and got my rifle. I slipped back and found a position not far away where I could watch for my chance. It came. I took steady aim and smashed the stock of his old gun all to pieces, then stepped out and killed the two dogs before his eyes. Holding to a splinter of the stock he tried to shoot me but missed. I took dead aim at his breast and said, "Bill, I want to kill you, but if you will start right now and go home, I won't." He went, but the man's face was deathly with rage and hatred. You talk about bad men. I believe there were more bad men at Allenscreek than any place I ever saw. They knew me before by reputation. They knew me now by personal contact. They were brave men of their kind and that's all there is to it. But they were mean natured and low of morals, and revengeful. They could not become reconciled to the fact that they had failed to oust and run me off as they had all other marshals, but they had resolved to do this yet, or kill me and I knew it. I knew that I would finally be ambushed and shot down if I didn't

take some precaution to protect myself. I wrote the chief of police at Nashville to lend me an armor or steel jacket. This was a sort of flexible chain undershirt, very effective in its purpose. It would not keep a bullet from bruising you, but from penetrating.

Living in Goose Bottom there was a bad negro called Fleece Johnson who owned a big yellow cur which he "pretended" to keep confined to his yard, but I was informed by another negro that the dog ran out when he pleased, so I hid in the bushes nearby and watched. After awhile the dog jumped over the fence and went to a neighbor's doorstep. I shot the dog there and went on about my business. In the afternoon old Fleece came on a rampage with a 45 calibre Winchester. Well, it was another fight just like the one I had with Fletcher, except that I shot the negro twice before he fell. He shot at me twice with the Winchester. One shot dug a hole in the bank behind me and the other cut a block out of a post that I had jumped behind as large as my two fists. The result of this fight was very bad for the negro, is as far as I wish to say. Except for a few minor incidents this ended my troubles over the dog ordinance.

Soon after this the engineers and firemen on the Buffalo Iron Company's switch and dinky engines called a strike. Some told me that there was a big stir-up or commotion at the engine shed. I took my Winchester and walked among the excited crowd.

Jolting my gun against the floor a few times I said, "Here, here, what's the row about?"

Jesse Merrell, one of the engineers here spoke up saying, "These fellows have struck for higher wages and refuse to allow me to go on my engine."

I looked around and asked, "Is there a man here that will fire this man's engine?"

My fourteen-year-old boy, who was an oil boy on the works, stepped forward and said that he would fire the engine. I then told Merrell to go ahead. As he started four or five started after him. I got between them and him, a big fellow twisted my rifle away from me and I knocked him down. Another started for the rifle and I went for him, but at the same time I was simply covered up with men and they got my stick. Now talk about a rough and tumble fist fight, that was it. Things were mixed with legs, arms and heads as never was seen before or since. That is the version of the fracas given by the press. Finally covered with blood and rags I got to where I could shove loose from them and get out my pistol. Then a popping took place. First the fellows with my rifle and stick fell forward to the ground. A big fellow grabbed me around the waist from behind. I shot him the full length of his thigh from the hip to the knee. He let go and I once more had free action with my guns. The gang saw this and stopped their onslaught. One persistent fellow sidled around to come upon me from behind. I just thrust out and poked him

across the caboose of the pants. He jumped straight and hit the ground running and yelling that his heart was shot out. This ended the fight and the strike. I was beaten nearly to death, and the surgeon was once more called from Nashville. The wounds of some of the strikers were serious and disastrous for one. I am a regular fellow with the fear of God in my heart, and of course regret those events, but was I so much to blame? Dear readers, you may primarily judge, but yonder's supreme court will right all wrongs and I am not much afraid.

On the afternoon of the next day as I walked up Peery Hollow I heard the pop of a rifle a good ways off on top of a high hill. Instantly following, a bullet plowed up the dust at my feet. So that was to be their tactics. A day or two later the "coat of mail" arrived by express. I was glad to receive this more because I wished to convince this bad element that this was supposed to be a civilized country than anything else. In other words, I wished to protect the progress I was making more than to protect myself. I found the mechanism of the jacket to be several thicknesses of woven spring steel wire covered with a chain garment of small steel links. The jacket was lined with a sort of soft blanketing material. The thing fitted pretty snug under my shirt and protected me from my neck to below my hips and to my elbows. A few days after I had donned my coat of mail, I was walking over the ridge from Peery Hollow when I was fired upon from the

bushes with a shot gun. The compact of the charge knocked me clear around and seemed to nearly break me in two. Instantly I sent a round of pistol shots into the place where the smoke floated from. There was a groan and a tearing through the brush. I did not follow. I walked on so bruised and sore I could hardly bend my body, but the jacket had surely saved my life. One afternoon I saw the doctor coming in from towards Peery Hollow. I asked, "Where you been Doc? Who's sick?"

"Been over to see Bill Staggs. He's shot himself. Nearly bled to death. Pretty severe wound too."

"Uh-huh," I replied and started on.

"Oh wait a minute, Jim, what do you know about that wound? It certainly didn't look like a self-inflicted wound to me."

"It's alright Doc, just so he gets over it is all we need worry about, isn't it?"

He chuckled to himself and drove on.

Next day I went over to see Staggs. As I went in Lem Pollard came out. I asked Staggs how he was. He just opened his mouth with a smack and glared at me without replying. Presently his wife left the room and I said to him, "Bill, you ought to die, but I hope you don't. Next time I pull down on you Bill you will surely die, understand?" With that I left him. As I went out I saw no sign of Pollard or his horse that was tied to the fence as I went in. On my way when I came to the spot

where I had been shot at once before from the top of the hill, once more I heard the pop of a rifle and the ping of a bullet as it went past me. I bowed low, waved my hand and walked on. For thirty yards I was in full view of the hill, and this time the popping and pinging kept up till I was out of view. It was hazardous to walk across that space because if he had hit me in the head I would have been done for, or if he had crippled me in the legs he could have come down and finished me. I knew it was Lem Pollard doing the shooting. Late that afternoon Lem Pollard rode through town on his way home. I met him on the street greeted him with, "Why hello, Lem! What's the matter with your old gun, can't you hit nothing?"

He scowled and rode on and I said, "Say Lem, the old booger man will get you if you don't quit your sinful ways." The bystanders laughed him out of town.

CHAPTER XX.

Four Bad Men Wish to Paint the Town Red, But Get Painted Black.

On three other occasions I was waylaid and shot at from ambush. I was struck each time about the body. There is no use to detail accounts of those occasions for they would be about the same monotonous detail as that of the Staggs attempt except that I got no chance to retaliate. Things rocked along comparatively quiet for the next three or four weeks except the bush whacking, which I said nothing about. Finally Bill Staggs arose from his sick bed and got about again. One day he and two of the Pollards, after they had passed me on the street, stopped and studied me as if they were trying to discern what was holding me upright. I turned upon them and said, "It's a wonder, isn't it?"

Their jaws dropped and they sauntered on.

A few days after I saw Bill Staggs and Lem Pollard go into the livery stable. I quickly resolved to overhear a part of that conversation. Slipping up a gully I came up to the back of the barn and I put my ear to the thin plank wall. Luckily they were in the stall just inside. I picked up the conversation as follows: "I don't see how the

devil we are ever going to get him," said Staggs, "you emptied your rifle at him from the hill and you evidently didn't hit him, and there has been four loads of buckshot thrown against him with deliberate aim. I shot one of those, and you say Cal and your brothers each took a turn at him, and he still walks and he is no ghost."

"But listen Bill, with your co-operation, my two brothers, Cal and myself will get him this time. We are all going to fire upon him at once: two at his body and two at his head. If he isn't the devil from Hell, that will get him. He'll be ours, I tell you. Now here is our plan. Listen, day after tomorrow you raise Hell in Peery Hollow and have Jim Patan to send Dan, that wall-eyed half-wit after the police. Send him about two o'clock, and when we see him go toward town, we will take our places behind the old pine log on the ridge with our guns ready. You know where the old log is, in half an hour then he should be coming along and we will get him. Now do you get the details of the plans?"

"Yes, but I'll bet you a jug of whiskey it don't work. He ain't no ordinary fool. I'll do my part of the plan. It's up to you four to succeed or fail."

"We won't fail. Cal Brewer would die if this man kept on domineering us fellows this way. No man ever did do it before and Cal says no man ever shall again." Here they went out and back up the street. I slipped away and walked casually up the

sidewalk smiling all over myself with triumph. But I shuddered when I realized that their plan would surely have worked had I not overheard the plot. Next morning I slipped off up to the ridge and surveyed the ambush in detail and laid some plans of my own. Yes, there was the old log about twenty-five steps from the road. To remain entirely out of sight they would have to lie upon their stomachs. Yes, yonder further back is an awful thick cluster of bushes and grapevines, let's take a look. I found that two or three men could hide in this cluster without being seen even if a person walked all around it. Yes, here is where I will be when Dan goes by to town, but Dan won't leave town till the fun begins. I went straight to my friend Johnson and laid the whole plot before him, I then unfolded my plan to him. He laughed and roared till I thought he was in danger of fits.

"Of course it can't fail," I added, "unless they discover us hidden among the vines, and that is not likely."

In the afternoon I got a small bucket of black paint of the harmless kind and a brush. At ten o'clock next day Johnson and myself slipped out of town and up to the ridge and hid ourselves in the cluster of grapevines with two pistols each and the black paint and brush. About one thirty o'clock the four would-be murderers rode into the woods and tied their horses, and took up their positions behind the old log. They sat at ease until

sometime after Dan went whistling by. I had made arrangements with Charley Huggins, another friend of mine, to hold Dan in town. When they had got well settled upon their stomachs with their guns pointed over the top side of the log, I slipped out and crawled toward them with a pistol in each hand. When about twenty steps from them I arose and strode toward them as I hissed, "Take your hands off those guns and don't move or you are dead men as fast as I can pull the triggers. There, that's right. Here Johnson," I shouted. When he stepped up I said, "Get those guns and their pistols and stack them back here, and then cover them with your pistols." This done, I took one of them and dragged him backward by the heels. I then took the paint and brush and sat astride his back while I worked, holding him by the hair of the head with my left hand. I turned his face from side to side and painted with my right. I painted him solid from the top of his head clear down under his collar. He spluttered and cursed and fumed, but nevertheless when I had finished him I dragged him aside and dragged backwards another and served him the same way, and thus until I was through to the last man. Then I took up the shotguns and fired four times simultaneously. "What did you do that for?" asked Johnson.

"I want Staggs. He will be here in no time to see the result of the ambuscade. Now you keep your worst eye on those devils, and if they so much

as move shoot their heads off. I will hide on the road a little further down and get him."

Sure enough in a few minutes Staggs came puffing along in a trot. I fell in immediately behind him and ordered his hands up. When he complied I took his pistol away from him and marched him to the scene of the ambushade. Then I threw him upon his stomach and proceeded to paint him while he had fits of rage and snarls. When I had finished I instructed Johnson to bring their horses. This done, we ordered them to mount and go before us into town, Staggs astride behind his friend, Lem Pollard. We carried the shot guns along in our hands. Arriving in front of the Mayor's office, I called him out, and then shouted, "Right this way gentlemen, and behold Allenscreek's bad men." Repeating this several times I soon had a crowd together. I then stepped upon the front of the office and related the whole circumstances of the ambushade and many other things. The people begun to shout, "Hang the scoundrels, hang them, hang them." Then I told the rascals to ride and ride fast. Those guys went home and left that night for Birmingham, Alabama, so we learned later. Though I had several minor fracasas from time to time, I had no more serious trouble with the real outlaws all gone. The few left who thought they were bad hadn't the courage to start anything.

I was commended all over Tennessee for my efficiency and service as marshal of Allenscreek. The rest of my career as marshal there was in no way different from that of any other marshal in a mining

town and would not be of interest to my readers. In relating my story I would much rather it had been written in the second person. The I's do not look good to me, but I never have been "proud" of my reputation as a scrapper. After all I am just a regular fellow and want to be friends with every good man, woman or child, and I think I have friends of many good people. Late in the fall I decided to quit Allenscreek and come to Texas. We had several children and Allenscreek was not a good place for children. The school was a mock and the Sunday School and church work was no better. The city council and the best people heartily expressed their regrets to give me up. So I landed in Texas nearly eighteen years ago. I have had very little fighting experiences here; can count my fights here all on the fingers of one hand, leaving out the thumb. The very last fight I had was months ago, with the leader of a gang who rooted against, and knocked on, every good institution and effort of the good people of this community and had domineered over the neighborhood for years. I had been justice of the peace here for six years and had some of the gang's names written in my criminal docket, and they didn't like me and begun to knock on me. I finally knocked back, and I knocked that guy all over ——— Town. The citizens made up my fine and paid it. And I shook two hundred hands for the service rendered.

This ends my story. Good-bye friends, come to see me sometime.

